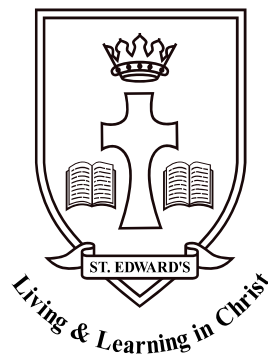


St Edward's Catholic Junior School

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me".
Philippians 4: 13



SCHOOL DOG POLICY

Rationale

The head teacher, deputy head teacher and SENCO at St Edward's Catholic Junior School, have considered the possibility of having a school dog from May 2018, to July 2020. The underlying reason for considering this was that there could be considerable benefits and advantages to both pupils and the wider school community.

Schools that have a School Dog, find that they assist in:

- Teaching responsibility and respect;
- Teaching empathy, non-violence and in some cases how to love and have patience;
- Motivating children who are not that attentive;
- Increasing social skills and self-esteem;
- Increasing confidence around dogs and in general;
- Improvement in attendance rates;
- Supporting calm behaviour – both in classrooms and in a 1:1 situation;
- Increasing literacy skills – children begin to enjoy reading and want to read aloud.

Governing Body approval in principle was gained in October 2019, as was support from SLT and staff.

It is recognised that animals are not generally allowed in either the school building or grounds, unless a full risk assessment has been undertaken, that takes into account the behaviour and characteristics of the animal(s). Dogs belonging to parents and carers are not allowed on the school site. This will not change.

A full risk assessment has been undertaken for the School dog/puppy. This will be reviewed when the puppy is introduced to school, and then again on a regular basis.

It is accepted that interacting with a dog may not be appropriate for all children, staff or visitors, but that for the majority it has the potential to provide many positive benefits. Any parent or carer who does not wish their child to interact with the dog/puppy will be asked to inform Mrs Heritage via the school office of their wishes. Any staff member or visitor who does not wish to interact with the dog/puppy should also inform Mrs Heritage or another member of staff. Mrs Heritage will then ensure that their wishes are taken into account and that they do not have direct contact with the dog at any time. A list of these children will be kept in the school office.

Dog Welfare

The welfare of the dog/puppy is of great importance to us. It will have a 'safe place' in Mrs Heritage's office where it will be during all non-contact times. The dog/puppy will be walked and toileted during the day and water will be available at all times. The dog/puppy will undergo appropriate training and be well socialised. If Mrs Heritage has to work beyond regular working hours, is out of school on a trip/training course, or the dog/puppy is tired or unwell then it will not need to come to school on those days. It can stay at home with Mr Heritage (who works from home) and rest. The dog/puppy will have active sessions of up to one hour at a time before being rested.

Context

The dog will:

- Be owned by Mrs Heritage and her family.
- Be introduced to school as a puppy and will 'grow' up with Mrs Heritage in school.
- 'Live' in Mrs Heritage's office, where it will have its bed, water, etc.
- Always be kept on a lead when moving around school.

- Have a dedicated area to relieve itself in an area that children do not access.
- Costs associated with the dog, including veterinary costs will be shared between school and Mrs Heritage.
- Visitors and pupils will be informed of a dog on site.
- Parents and carers will be asked before their child(ren) has contact with the dog. A record of children who do not wish to interact with the dog will be kept in the office.

The role of the school dog

First 6 months

During this time, the dog will be socialised by Mrs Heritage and will learn basic commands through positive reinforcement training.

- ✓ At the same time, educational assemblies for all children will take place. The Dogs Trust will lead an assembly and workshops which will teach them how to interact with the school puppy and dogs in general. This will extend to teaching the children how to 'read' the body language of dogs and the golden rules to apply when meeting dogs.
- ✓ Children may, as the dog gets older, have basic interaction with the dog, albeit under constant supervision.

6 months onwards

- ✓ Mrs Heritage may run a lunch/breaktime club where a small group of children will be allowed to walk with her and the dog. She will ensure that all children who would like to do this are given a 'fair' opportunity to do so.
- ✓ The dog will begin its more intensive training with Mrs Heritage.
- ✓ The dog will be assessed by a dog behaviourist to assess its suitability to continue its work in school.

Requirements

It will be a requirement that the dog:

- Is regularly groomed and checked for signs of infection or other illness.
- Is diagnosed and treated by a vet if it is ill and does not attend school.
- Receives regular inoculations.
- Is wormed and treated for fleas and other parasites at the interval recommended by the Vet.
- Has its claws trimmed to reduce the risk of scratches.
- Be exercised before being allowed to work with children.

It will be a requirement of the handler/owner to ensure that:

- The dog is physically fit before visiting the school environment;
- The dog is kept on a lead when moving through the school or school ground during school hours. The dog may be taken off the lead whilst in its penned area and during direct training with the handler;
- They remain with the dog at all times when it is not in its crate, or penned area;
- The dog is discouraged from jumping, scratching and licking;
- The dog is of an acceptable hygienic standard, i.e. not muddy, wet etc.
- Natural relief for the dog is taken in the designated area only, which pupils do not access.
- Waste will be disposed of by the handler, in bags deposited in a designated bin.

Pupils will:

- Never have sole responsibility for, or be left alone with the dog;
- Directly 'work' or interact with the dog in a group of more than 3 children;
- Be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog as part of an education programme run by Mrs Heritage. Appropriate behaviours are:
 - Always remain calm around the dog
 - Don't make sudden movements and be gentle

- Always approach the dog standing up
- Do not approach the dog when it is sleeping or eating
- Don't put your face near the dog
- Don't stare into the dog's eyes as this can be interpreted as a threat
- Do not eat close to the dog and never feed the dog.
- Learn about how dogs express their feelings through their body language. Growling or baring of teeth indicated that the dog is feeling threatened or angry. Flattened ears, tail lowered or between their legs, hiding behind their owner, whining or growling being signs that the dog is frightened or nervous. If the dog ever displays these warning signs it will immediately be removed from that particular situation or environment;
- Be informed of the following health and safety principles:
 - Always wash their hands and/or use anti-bac gel after handling the dog
 - Dog 'mess' will be cleaned up immediately by Mrs Heritage or another adult. This must never be done by children.

Should a bite (even playful) ever occur:

1. Parents or carers will be contacted immediately.
2. The wound will be cleaned and covered with a sterile, non-sticky dressing.
3. The child/adult will be released for medical attention.
4. All staff will be informed.
5. The dog will be removed from direct contact with any child pending the outcome of the full investigation and reassessment.
6. A full investigation into the circumstances will be led by the Head Teacher.
7. The suitability of the dog will be re-assessed by the Head Teacher, Governing Body and if appropriate a dog behaviourist.

Name of Head Teacher: Mrs Suzette Harris

Signature:|.....

Date:

Name of Chair of Governors: Mrs Maria Harty

Signature:

Date

Review date:

REVIEW OF POLICY

This policy will be reviewed annually.