



Longmeadow Primary School
School Dog Policy

Policy Agreed	September 2019
Date for Review	September 2020

School Dog Policy

Purpose:

Children can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills through contact with a dog, as outlined below. In addition to these benefits, children take great enjoyment from interaction with a dog.

Animals in school have been shown to reduce anxiety in some children finding school challenging. Researchers report that students can identify with and feel grounded by animals, and that having a dog in school can promote further positive behaviour across the student body, including students showing more confidence and responsibility. With the presence of a calm and well-trained dog, students find social support and peer interaction. Reading programmes with dogs have been shown to be highly beneficial for some students. Children who may be embarrassed to read aloud to the class or even adults are more likely to read to a dog - a dog won't judge or correct. Dogs are happy to have students read to them, or to join a group of children in the library whilst they are having a book reading session. Dogs give unconditional acceptance, as they are non-judgmental, which is especially crucial to struggling, emerging readers. Research has shown that students who read to dogs show an increase in reading levels, word recognition, a higher desire to read and write, and an increase in intra and interpersonal skills among the students they mix with. Our dog will therefore be used to encourage struggling readers to practise reading aloud.

Dogs in school offer an opportunity for improving social development. They are especially useful for teaching student's social skills and responsibility. Specifically, schools are using dogs to help students build self-esteem; learn about positive and negative reinforcement, responsibility, and boundaries.

Our school dog will also offer students who want it, a reward. Those students who have performed incredibly well during the week or those who have made progress in a certain subject, or those who have achieved tasks set for them, will be rewarded with spending time during lunch or break to interact with Murphy. Walking, grooming, playing and training are some of the responsibilities students will be allowed to undertake.

Roles and Responsibilities

- The Governing Body has a responsibility to ensure that the school has a written policy for Dogs in School.
- The Headteacher is responsible for implementing this policy. The Headteacher may delegate this responsibility to a Deputy Headteacher / Assistant Headteacher in their absence.
- All staff and visitors are required to abide by this policy

School Policy

General Points:

- Murphy will be owned by Mrs Emily Howley. Murphy is a Labrador chosen for its gentle and affectionate temperament and effective training ability. In the absence of Mrs Emily Howley, Mr Tony Howley (PE Teacher), Mrs Emma Turner (Inclusion Co-ordinator, INCo) or Miss Tanya Goddard (Inclusion Assistant) will supervise Murphy. All four of these staff are involved in weekly training sessions for Murphy, with his specialised trainers.
- The Co - Chairs of Governors is in full support of the school having a dog, as are the school's Governing Board.
- The school dog will be an education assistance dog for the charity Dogs Helping Kids. Dogs Helping Kids is a unique charity with its headquarters based in North Devon, England. They are one of the only organisations in the country training and assessing dogs purely to work in a school, college, and library environment as both educational and therapeutic aids. Dogs Helping Kids believes that a dog should only be working with a child

or teenager, in an educational environment, if it has been trained, assessed and certified to do so. Each one of their Certified DHK School Dogs has had to complete a two-year training programme, pass 6 increasingly difficult assessments, and once certified, undergo an annual assessment. This is for the safety of the children, the staff, the School Dog owner and the School Dog. Murphy (Longmeadow's school dog) is in the early stages of this, having started his initial training.

- Murphy is on a regular, specialised training program; provided by accredited dog trainers locally. This is provided by Barking Mad Dog Training School (DTS). Barking Mad DTS provide a full day of training to Murphy on a Wednesday. He attends their training facility in Gravely, Hertfordshire to support the behaviour he needs to display when 'working' in school. This is then delivered weekly to his key handlers in school - Mrs Emily Howley (Headteacher), Mr Tony Howley (PE Teacher), Mrs Emma Turner (Inclusion Co-ordinator, INCo) or Miss Tanya Goddard (Inclusion Assistant) will supervise Murphy. All four of these staff are involved in weekly training sessions for Murphy, with his specialised trainers and key messages are then cascaded to staff, pupils and the community as necessary.
- The school has taken all reasonable steps to advise stakeholders about Murphy and to mitigate any risks, including full communication with stakeholders. Staff have been informed by the Headteacher that the school will have a dog and given key information relating to this. Parents have been informed by letter that a dog will be in school, alongside key Q&A sheets. Murphy is discussed regularly with pupils via assemblies using key information provided by the charity such as 'Learn to speak dog' and as key issues come up within the school environment and Murphy's training. The school community has also been informed through the drawing up and distribution of a School Dog Policy; the drawing up of a School Dog risk assessment; the inclusion of the school dog in the school's Behaviour Policy. The school dog policy and risk assessment are available freely to read via this display the school website. These are updated regularly.
- Briefings for stakeholders to remind people of the salient points of this Policy will take place at the start of each school year, and during the year for any new starters – staff and pupils
- Information about Murphy will form part of the school's recruitment practice for any potential members of staff and part of the school induction policy for new staff
- A dedicated risk assessment has been produced which will be reviewed annually and more frequently if necessary.
- Murphy will be fully vaccinated and kept in good health, under the care of MediVets in Biggleswade.
- Murphy is fully insured with Tesco Insurance. This includes additional levels of insurance as he attends school.
- If Murphy is ill, he will not be allowed into school and will be cared for by Mr and Mrs Thompson. This is a place that Murphy knows well as he spends time there on a Wednesday as a day off from school.
- The school dog will have a permanent base in addition to moving around the school – The PPA are (no children enter this area) and Mrs Howley's office.
- Dogs express their feelings through their body language. Growling or baring of teeth indicate that Murphy is feeling angry or threatened. Flattened ears, tail lowered or between their legs, hiding behind their owner, whining or growling are signs that Murphy is frightened or nervous. If Murphy is displaying any of these warning signs he will be immediately removed from that particular situation or environment. To date Murphy has never shown these signs either in or out of school.
- Murphy has a designated toileting area. Where possible, his handler will take him there to toilet. As he is a dog, he may not always use this area. If this is the case, any dog foul will be immediately cleaned up by his handler and never by children.
- The person overseeing Murphy at any given time is responsible for ensuring that the requirements of the School Dog Policy are met

Visitors to the School:

- All supply staff will be advised that the school has a dog and asked regarding any allergies
- Visitors will be asked on arrival if they would prefer not to have any contact with the Murphy
- Murphy will always have a known adult with him within the school building

Contact with the School Dog:

- Staff, visitors and students known to have allergic reactions to dogs must not go near Murphy. Parents will be asked to advise if their child does not desire contact with Murphy for health/emotional reasons. A meeting regarding this will be required. A timetable for Murphy will be produced, and the school will ensure that such students have no direct, school initiated contact with Murphy. Note, this does not include visits to classrooms by Murphy on learning walks or walking around site during the day
- Murphy is a member of our school community and pupil voice shows us that all pupils feel he is something they value and enjoy about our school. While we respect parental right to choice, in order to remove permission for children to spend time with Murphy a meeting with a senior member of staff is required to discuss this. Furthermore, this is with the understanding that while no 1:1 contact will be initiated for contact with Murphy, day to day school life contact cannot be prevented (i.e. through classrooms visits, time on the field with children) as this would implement the provision for other children and their wellbeing.
- Murphy will be under the full control and supervision of an adult
- Students will never be left alone with Murphy and there will be appropriate adult supervision at all times when Murphy is present with students

Student and Adult Conduct with Murphy:

- Students and adults will be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around Murphy at assemblies and during the school day
- Students and adults are reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around Murphy:
 - Students and adults must follow the instructions of the adult handler at all times and without question
 - The supervising adult with Murphy will decide how many students/adults can be with Murphy at any one time
 - Students and adults with known medical allergies must not go near Murphy at any time
 - Students and adults should remain calm around Murphy
 - Students and adults must not make sudden movements or loud noises, and must never stare into a dog's eyes as this could be threatening for Murphy
 - Students and adults must not put their face near to Murphy and should always approach him standing up
 - Students and adults must never go near or disturb Murphy if it is sleeping or eating
 - Students and adults must NEVER play too roughly with Murphy
 - Students and adults must not feed, or eat close to Murphy at any time
 - Students and adults must always wash their hands after handling Murphy
- Students and adults not abiding by the above do so at their own risk
- Any deliberate attempt to harm the school dog will result in an exclusion incident/staff disciplinary measure

School Dogs Welfare:

To ensure the Murphy's welfare in school, the school dog will adhere to the following timetable as an absolute minimum:

7am	Feed and morning walk (to be completed by the HT)
8am	Quiet time and sleep
10am	Toilet break in pen
12.30pm	Lunch and Lunchtime walk (roughly 30 minutes)
3.30pm	Toilet break in pen

If Murphy shows any signs of hyper arousal, then he should be placed in his crate for quiet time to sleep. Murphy should also be taken for playtime on the field if required. Training and games can be played with Murphy to tire him out mentally.