

# Windmill Hill Academy

## Dogs in School Policy

The An Daras Multi Academy Trust (ADMAT) Company  
 An Exempt Charity Limited by Guarantee  
 Company Number/08156955

<b>Status: Approved</b>	
Recommended	
Statutory	No
Version	V2
Adopted	<b>Autumn 2024</b>
Review	<b>Autumn 2027</b>
Advisory Committee	Local Governing Advisory Board
Linked Documents and Policies	Health and Safety Policy Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy First Aid Policy Behaviour Policy Allergens Policy School Dog information Parent Consent forms School Dog Risk assessment Therapy Dog Nationwide documents and Risk assessment

### **UNICEF's Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA):**

We follow a human rights based approach to behaviour through UNICEF's Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA), which helps schools to use the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) as the school's values framework.

This policy supports Article 3: *All adults should do what is best for you. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect the children.*

### **Aims**

At Windmill Hill Academy, we have our own school well-being dog called Bertie. Children will be able to benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills through contact with a dog. In addition to these benefits, research has shown that children take great enjoyment from interaction with a dog.

### **Risk Assessment**

A thorough risk assessment has been carried out (please see latest version on the school website). Dogs are not allowed anywhere on the school site at any time unless specifically authorised by the Headteacher. This includes drop off and collection times. This policy outlines measures put in place to allow the school dog to be present. A letter has been sent to all stakeholders of the school introducing Bertie and also a consent form sought for each pupil. Any new pupils joining the school, will be sent the relevant information and permissions sought. Should any other information be needed or questions be raised, Mrs Bassett will be available to discuss.

### **School Policy**

The dog is owned by Mrs Bassett. Bertie will attend school alongside Mrs Bassett's working hours. Bertie is fully vaccinated, receives regular worming and flea treatment and has regular health checks. Bertie is covered through the school's public liability insurance and an additional public liability insurance sought by Mrs Bassett.

- Only the school dog is allowed on the premises. All other dogs must not come on site unless they are a known therapy dog and the Headteacher has been informed beforehand and given written consent.
- The dog is a Labrador Retriever which has been chosen because the breed is known to be child-friendly, gentle mannered and affectionate, yet sensitive. The breed is also known to be highly intelligent and respond excellently to training.
- The governing board agree that a school dog will benefit the children and staff of Windmill Hill Academy.
- The Trust, governors, staff, parents and children have been informed by letter that a dog will be in school.
- Mrs Bassett has produced a risk assessment which has been approved by the Trust and Governing Body. This will be reviewed annually.
- Staff, visitors and children known to have allergic reactions to dogs must not go near the dog. A list of people allergic will be kept on SIMs and the consent forms. All visitors will be informed on arrival that there is a dog in school.

- If the dog is ill, he will not attend school.
- The dog 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 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 must wash their hands before and after stroking the dog and use only their hands to touch the dog.
- Children should never go near or disturb the dog when he is sleeping or eating.
- Children must not be allowed to play roughly with the dog.
- If the dog is surrounded by a large number of children, the dog could become nervous and agitated. Therefore, the adult in charge of the dog must ensure that s/he monitors the situation.
- 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 should not eat close to the dog.
- Children should be careful to stroke Bertie on his body, chest and back.
- Any dog foul should be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately. A specified area within the school grounds has been identified to ensure that the children do not come into contact with faeces.
- Parents will be consulted on allowing their pupils access to the dog and consent forms obtained.
- All visitors will be informed about the dog and related protocols on arrival and Miss Armstrong will relay visitor issues to Mrs Bassett.
- Appropriately trained staff will maintain records and anecdotal evidence of the work and impact of the school dog. This includes Mrs Bassett and TIS trained staff.
- 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 Mrs Bassett.
- The dog will not come to school, if Mrs Bassett is not present.
- Miss Armstrong will be the second named person responsible for Bertie.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

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

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) Improve wellbeing

## 8) Motivate children

The following information has been taken from a range of sources to provide further detail about the benefits of having a dog in school:

**Behaviour:** In some schools, dogs are making a difference in the behaviour of pupils. Researchers report that students can identify with animals, and with empathy for the dog, can better understand how classmates may feel. It was found that violent behaviour in participating students declined by 55%, and general aggression went down 62%. Behaviour problems occur in school and these can interfere with learning. Some schools are using dogs to improve behaviour problems by promoting positive behaviour in students. In a controlled study, students were found to have fewer disciplinary referrals in schools with a dog than schools without. Students' behaviour improved toward teachers, and students also showed more confidence and responsibility. Additionally, parents reported that children seemed more interested in school as a result of having a dog at school.

### Attendance:

Some children find entering the school day a daunting exercise which can lead to refusal to engage for the rest of the day. The dog can help to distract, calm and engage the child thereby motivating them into starting the day positively.

### Education:

Reading programmes with dogs are doing wonders for some students. Children who might be embarrassed to read aloud to the class or even adults are likely to be less scared to read to a dog. "It might be less stressful for a child to read aloud to a dog than to a teacher or a peer. After all, a dog won't judge or correct you." Dogs are used to encourage struggling readers to practise reading aloud. With the presence of a 'calm and well-trained dog', students find social support and peer interaction. Dogs are incredibly calm and happy to have student read to them or 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. The dogs also provide confidence to children as they do not make fun of them when they read, but above all they make amazing listeners, providing the children with a sense of comfort and love. Research has proved 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. Windmill Hill Academy hopes to train the dog to this level so that pupils will be able to benefit from the type of intervention.

### Social Development:

Dogs in school offer an opportunity for improving social development. They are especially useful for teaching students' social skills and responsibility. Specifically, using dogs to help older students build self-esteem; learn about positive and negative reinforcement, responsibility, and boundaries. The dog can help older pupils communicate, expect and show kindness, learn empathy whilst developing their nurturing skills. With a dog in school, pupils have the opportunity to learn how to care for the animal. This includes walking and grooming. Researchers report that involving students in the daily care of classroom dogs is a positive experience, promoting their own daily care. The pupils also learn about responsibility, caring, and sharing when helping each other take care of a dog at school.

### As a reward:

Dogs will be gentle and loving, but at the same time full of fun and enjoyment for the students. 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 the dog. Walking, grooming, playing and training are some of the responsibilities students will be allowed to undertake. It has been proved that working and playing with a dog improves children's social skills and self-esteem. Support Dogs can work with pupils on a one-one basis and will especially help those pupils who have struggled with friendships, been abused, going through upsetting/difficult times or even scared/phobic of dogs. The dog will bring much joy and help to all the pupils they meet and are happy to provide plenty of hugs to the students they are spending time with. Students who struggle with social interaction can find a reassuring friend in a dog.