

Crosby Primary School
School Pastoral Dog Policy adopted Autumn 2024
Next Review Autumn 2027



Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for staff, children, parents/carers and visitors regarding dogs and any other animals on the school site for educational purposes. The value of pet 'therapy' is widely accepted as a powerful aid to stimulation and communication. Studies have shown that the presence of companion animals can improve the well-being of children and lower the rate of anxiety, simply by making the environment happier, more enjoyable and less overwhelming. Crosby Primary School recognises that children can benefit from contact with pets and other animals, increasing their understanding of responsibility and developing empathy and nurturing skills. The development of these skills is a fundamental part of Crosby Primary School's personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. In addition to these benefits children take great enjoyment from interaction with pets and other animals.

With dogs being one of the UK's most popular pets, children are likely to have considerable exposure to dogs, in particular, outside school. Developing children's awareness of how to behave safely around dogs is therefore important. Dogs may also be brought into the school site by outside agencies, for example Guide Dogs for the Blind or animal rescue charities such as the Dogs Trust.

Risks of dogs and other animals on the school site

Crosby Primary School recognises that there are risks allowing dogs and other animals on the school site, including possible biting, scratching and barking which may harm or frighten children. Parents may understandably have concerns regarding dogs on the school site. It is Crosby Primary School's aim to maximise the benefit of children's contact with dogs and other animals, and control risks, by asking staff, parents/carers and visitors to follow some simple rules, exercise common sense and encourage the sensible behaviour of children around dogs and other animals.

We do not allow animals on the school site, the exceptions to this rule are:

- School pets
- Assistance dogs
- Those that form part of an educational visit/workshop (for example, Lion Learners) or that have been invited to attend school events (for example, Alpacas and Friends).

Legislation

Crosby Primary School is required to comply with all legislation including, but not limited to, the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. These pieces of legislation establish the standards that must be met to ensure the health and safety of all employees and others (children, parents/carers and visitors) who may be affected by any school activity and are enforced by the Health and Safety Executive.

Animals in School

Crosby Primary School carefully considered the possibility of having animals as school pets. Following both discussion and research, it was decided that a school pastoral dog (Daisy Dog) would be allowed in order to aid the learning of all our children and to develop their social and emotional well-being.

Introducing Daisy Dog!

A risk assessment is undertaken prior to any animal being brought into the school. Parents are notified by the Headteacher via an email explaining about the pastoral dog, asking families to advise the school of any allergies, or fears the children may have. Any adults working in school must also highlight any allergies or fears they may have so that appropriate can be taken. Children do not have unsupervised access, and are taught how to behave around animals and handle them safely. Crosby Primary School has rules in place when interacting with animals:



- Do ask for permission before touching an animal
- Do approach animals gently, calmly and quietly
- Do not put your face near an animal or stare into its eyes, this could be seen as threatening by the animal
- Do not disturb an animal that is sleeping or eating
- Do not feed an animal, unless you have permission from an adult
- Do wash your hands after handling animals

Staff ensure that Daisy Dog is in good health and is well cared for and kept in a suitable environment, following guidance of the RSPCA. In line with the risk assessment, should any child or adult be scratched or bitten at school, appropriate first aid would be administered immediately and in the case of a child, parents notified.

Children with medical concerns

Health issues are considered when assessing the appropriateness of animals in school. Any medical notes are reviewed and where an allergy is noted, the animal would be kept away from the child as necessary.

Responsibility

Parents/carers must keep school informed of any possible allergies concerning animals. Parents/carers are encouraged to contact school with any concerns.

All adults are responsible for Daisy Dog when in their care. The risk assessment and pastoral dog policy will be followed at all times. Dependent on where Daisy Dog is in school, a member of staff will ensure that she has access to sufficient food, water, a comfortable environment and an appropriate toileting area. A named staff member will care for Daisy Dog during periods of school closures as appropriate.

Monitoring and Review

The governing body review this policy regularly, and monitor its impact on the school.

Date Adopted Autumn 2024