



**THAMES VIEW PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
**DOGS IN SCHOOL**  
**RISK ASSESSMENT 2024/25**

**Introduction:**

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 forbidding.

The rationale behind this decision is as follows:

- For the school to have a pet that is able to live as naturally as conditions would allow.
- For the animals to be properly cared for outside of the school day.
- To have a pet that the children could interact with and also be of benefit to the children’s social and emotional development.

It is accepted that interacting with animals is not appropriate for all children but for some it has the potential to provide many positive benefits. Any parent who does not want their child to interact with the dogs is invited to write to Mrs Rogers and inform them of their wishes. There are no diseases associated with the dogs as their vet will be responsible for vaccinations, completing regular health checks and necessary treatment. A copy of the dogs’s health records will be updated and kept in school. The dogs will also be insured.

The risk assessment below is a working document and will be checked annually by key staff. The dogs are in school as wellbeing support dogs to work with the inclusion team to benefit the children.

<b>Hazard</b>	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Risk 1 - 5</b>	<b>Controls in place</b>	<b>Review date</b>
dogs getting over excited when interacting with children.	Child knocked to the ground.	2	The dogs will always be in the care of the designated handlers or a “responsible adult”. “Responsible Adult” shall mean any member of staff who has read the policy fully, received appropriate training and is aware of the risks and responsibilities to both children and staff.  The dogs will never be left unattended. The dogs will never be allowed to roam freely around the school premises. The dogs must not be passed to any	July 2025
	Child scratched by dogs. Child bitten by dogs.	4		
A is scratched or bitten by the dog	Child receives scratch or bite and needs first aid	5		

			<p>member of staff not deemed a “responsible adult” as defined above. A list of appropriately trained adults will be displayed in school and can be identified by a dog paw lanyard and a dog handler high vis jacket when on duty.</p> <p>Children will not be left unsupervised with the dogs.</p> <p>In the event a child is scratched or bitten by the dog, the Head of School/Deputy will investigate, ensure appropriate first aid is given and will contact parents</p>	
--	--	--	--	--

			<p>The dogs will always be on a lead when moving between classrooms or on a walk by the designated handler or responsible adult while the children are in school.</p> <p>Pupils have been and will continue to be taught about the consequences of their actions.</p> <p>Education of this nature is continually given to children, and often to the whole school through assemblies and PSHE sessions.</p> <p>Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent the dogs from chasing them.</p> <p>Risk of scratching and biting will reduce with training and the risk assessment will be reviewed as they progress through their training.</p> <p>All staff will have been introduced to the dogs and expectations of having school dogs.</p> <p>The owner will ensure the dogs attend the vets regularly to ensure they are in good health and that their claws are kept short.</p>	
--	--	--	---	--

<p>The dogs causing allergies.</p>	<p>Children or staff have allergic reactions</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>Parents have been asked to inform the school of any known allergies before the introduction of the dogs to the school.</p> <p>If required a list of any children/staff who should not interact with the dogs will be kept in school.</p> <p>The children will have the opportunity to interact with the dogs under the supervision of the designated handlers or responsible adults and those with allergies will be able to opt out of interaction.</p> <p>Children will be taught to wash their hands after active participation with the dogs.</p>	<p>July 2025</p>
<p>Children getting germs from the dogs.</p>	<p>Children or staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs.</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>Should the dogs defecate on the school site a member of staff will clear this up immediately and dispose of it in a safe way.</p> <p>They will be trained to toilet in an area of the grounds that children have limited access to. The area will be disinfected as required.</p> <p>All immunisations are kept up to date in accordance with the European Pet Passport Scheme and a record will be kept of this. Evidence must be recorded and kept in school.</p> <p>Flea treatment is carried out at 4 week intervals and is recorded.</p>	<p>July 2025</p>

			<p>The dogs will not be allowed in the school dining hall at meal times; and never in the food preparation area.</p> <p>The dogs will be regularly wormed.</p>	
Noise/barking	Some children unable to cope with the noise		<p>The dogs are being introduced into the school environment from an early age so will be used to a noisy environment so are less likely to bark.</p> <p>Extra orientation sessions in place for specific children.</p> <p>Ensuring some children have ear defenders if needed.</p>	July 2025
Financial cost of the dogs upkeep.	School unable to afford the ongoing cost of the dogs's day to day upkeep or medical bills.	3	<p>The dogs will be insured.</p> <p>All vets costs are covered by the owner or her private insurance paid for by the owner.</p>	July 2025
Dogs safety in the therapy area (inside and out)	The dogs have their own area in the Inclusion Hub. There is a small outdoor area.	5	<p>Fence is 5 foot so children cannot access the dogs unattended and the dogs can't escape. The dogs will be supervised in warmer weather to ensure they are not exposed to the sun or hot surfaces and can access shade indoors</p>	
Dogs are or become unwell	In the event that the dog is unwell, they will remain at home or be taken home as quickly as possible	3		

There is a fire drill/alarm in school	Dogs will always be with a handler or responsible adult			
Dogs defecate in area or leave mess in the inclusion area or school grounds	Dogs will be with a dog handler or responsible adult, who knows they have the responsibility to clear any dog mess and dispose of this safely	3	Dogs will be walked on a lead with their adult to the fire assembly point	July 2025
The dogs fight with each other	Dogs are siblings and have a strong bond. They play with each other but rarely fight. This has been incorporated in to their training.	3	All dog handlers and responsible adults will be made aware of the responsibility to clear up after the dogs. The Inclusion Team are responsible for the Inclusion area and will clean the area and the toys daily	July 2025
A safeguarding incident happens in the inclusion area, that requires the full focus of staff	The inclusion team is made up of 4 staff, who are all trained to handle the dogs, as well as the Head of School and the Deputy. A walkie talkie system is in place for additional adult support.	3	In the event of the dogs fighting, they will be separated by the dog handler, over the two inclusion rooms, one of which has a dog cage which could be used.	July 2025
A dog gets loose in the school buildings or grounds	The dogs have been trained since young puppies in recall.	3	There are 6 adults, two per dog who have been trained, an adult can step in at short notice with the on-call system, should an incident happen.	July 2025
			The dogs will follow their recall. If this does not respond, the dog handler will restrain the dog as required.	July 2025

Key: 1 Low risk 3 medium risk of injury 5 high risk of injury

To ensure the wellbeing of the dogs;

- The dogs will come in and out of school with either the Head of School or Wellbeing Co-Ordinator only to ensure familiarity.
- The dogs will be in school for a working day 8am to 4pm.
- The dogs will be in the Inclusion Hub, which is puppy proofed. The site manager will also carry out a risk assessment safety walk each morning, to ensure the site is safe and does not pose any risk to the wellbeing dogs or the children. The dogs will also be on a lead when walked, so the adult can monitor what the dog is eating.
- In the event of the dogs becoming unwell in the day, the wellbeing coordinator will drop them at home or take them to the vets if necessary.
- The dogs have a rest area in the Inclusion Hub, separate to children, as well as their dog cage, should they need to rest or nap during the day.
- The Inclusion Team Dog Handlers will be responsible for ensuring the dogs are fed and have access to water at all times.