DITCHAM PARK SCHOOL

Where every child is known and valued

Dogs in School Policy

Compiled by	Bursar
Approved by	Headmaster
Date of Review / amendment	August 2025
Next Review	Autumn 2027

Dogs in School Policy

1) Introduction and Aims

This policy applies to the whole school including Early Years and aims to ensure the safety and well-being of all pupils, staff, parents and visitors to Ditcham Park School.

Animals in the School Buildings

To minimise the risk to children in school, animals are not allowed in the School buildings. The definition of animals includes all pets including insects, fish and birds. The only exceptions to this rule are as follows:

- Assistance dogs partnered to pupils, staff or visitors to the school (eg: Guide Dogs for the Blind, Canine Partners, Hearing Dogs);
- Animals that have permanent residence in the school grounds, belonging either to the resident of Ditcham Park School Cottage or an educational department of the School, with the express agreement of the Headmaster and Bursar;
- Dogs registered to charities providing Animal Assisted Interventions in Schools who subscribe to the Kennel Club Educational Trust "Bark & Read" Standards of Practice (see paragraph 3), and with the advance written agreement of the Headmaster and Bursar;
- Dogs belonging to members of staff working in School during School holiday periods, when pupils are not in attendance, with the advance express agreement of the Headmaster or Bursar;

Dogs in the School Grounds

Dogs are not allowed anywhere on the School site at any time unless specifically authorised in advance by the Headmaster or Bursar. This includes drop off and collection times. The only exceptions to this rule are as follows:

- Assistance dogs partnered to pupils, staff or visitors to the school (eg: Guide Dogs for the Blind, Canine Partners, Hearing Dogs);
- Animals that have permanent residence in the school grounds, belonging either to the resident of Ditcham Park School Cottage or an educational department of the School, with the express agreement of the Headmaster and Bursar;
- Dogs registered to charities providing Animal Assisted Interventions in Schools who subscribe to the Kennel Club Educational Trust "Bark & Read" Standards of Practice (https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/media/1935/bark-and-read-standards-of-practice.pdf), and with the advance written agreement of the Headmaster and Bursar;
- Dogs belonging to members of staff working in School during School holiday periods, when pupils are not in attendance, with the advance express agreement of the Headmaster or Bursar; and

- Any dog belonging to a member of staff or family of the School supporting a School event such as a sponsored walk, with advance notification to the organising member of School staff.

All dog owners who have been granted permission to access the school buildings and grounds are required to adhere to the School's "Dogs in School Regulations" listed at paragraph 2.

2. Dogs in School Regulations

- Dogs must be on a lead at all times
- Dogs must be under control at all times
- Dogs must not be left unattended at any time
- Owners must pick up, and appropriately dispose of, their dog's excrement
- Dogs must not enter any of the school buildings unless they satisfy the criteria listed at point 1.
- Dogs must not enter food preparation areas.
- If it is felt by the Headmaster or Bursar that a dog is causing harm to individuals or the school site and/or equipment, or is creating a nuisance of itself, the owner of the dog will be asked to remove the dog from site with immediate effect.

3. Canine-assisted Intervention Programmes

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

Dogs registered to charities providing Animal Assisted Interventions (AAI) in Schools, who are members of the Kennel Club "Bark & Read" Alliance and subscribe to the Bark & Read Standards of Practice are, with the advance written agreement of the Headmaster and Bursar, permitted into the School buildings to deliver canine-assisted intervention programmes.

Owners who bring their dogs into School for this purpose agree to adhere to the Standards of Practice referenced above.

Whilst there is a risk in bringing a dog into a school environment, the School believes the educational and emotional benefits to pupils outweigh the associated risk of possible injuries or incidents caused by a dog. The risk needs to be managed, and before any dog is introduced into the school environment a thorough risk assessment will be carried out. A sample risk assessment is provided at Appendix A.

Appendix A

Sample AAI Dog Risk Assessment

Hazard	Risk	Risk 1-5*	Likelihood 1 – 5*	Risk Total	Controls
Dog gets overexcited when interacting with children.	Child knocked to ground	**1**	**2**	**2**	The dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult and will never be allowed to freely roam the school premises. Children are not left with the dog unsupervised. The dog will always be on a lead. The dog is trained not to jump up or mouth the children. Pupils are taught the impact of their actions. Education of this nature is continually given to children, and often to whole school during assemblies. Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent the dog from chasing them. (i.e. stand still, cross arms) The dog will undergo conditioning to the school classroom environment, this area of training with allow future reading or nurture intervention to involve the dog in a calming/therapeutic manner. ALL staff will be introduced to the dog and the expectations (dos and don'ts) of having a dog in school. The dog will attend the vets' regularly to make sure his claws are kept short and that he is in good health.
	Child scratched by dog	**3**	**2**	**6**	
	Child bitten by dog	**4**	**2**	**8**	
The dog gets loose from his pen or from his lead.	Child knocked to ground	**1**	**2**	**2**	The dog's pen will be big enough for him to be happy and safe during the school day and the children are taught not too tease. If the dog does get loose from his pen the dogs owner and / or teacher on duty will put the dog back in his pen. In the event of the dog getting loose or if he needs attention at any other time, the owner and the following members of staff will deal with this. They are: 1. Mr/Mrs xx (Owner) 2. Mr/Mrs xx (Teacher/Tutor) 3. Mr/Mrs xx (Teaching Assistant) 4. Mr/Mrs xx (Other)
	Child scratched by dog	**3**	**2**	**6**	
	Child bitten by dog	**4**	**2**	**8**	
Dog hair causing allergies	Children have allergic reactions	**1**	**1**	**1**	Parents have been asked to inform the school of any known allergies prior to introduction of the dog to school. A list of any children who should not interact with the dog will be kept on the school recording management information system SIMS. Children will have the opportunity to interact with the dog as they wish and those with allergies will be able to opt out of interaction. Children have been taught to wash their hands after active participation with the dog.

Hazard	**Risk**	**Risk 1-5***	**Likelihood 1 – 5***	**Risk Total**	**Controls**
Children getting germs from the dog.	Children or staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs	**1**	**1**	**1**	Should the dog defecate on the school site the owner will clear this up immediately and dispose of it in a safe manner. The dog will be trained to toilet in a nominated area of the school that pupils do not access on a regular basis. If required, the area will then be disinfected with an appropriate animal disinfectant. All immunisations (including rabies vaccination) are kept up to date in accordance verified by the supporting AAI charity. Flea treatment is carried out prescribed intervals. Worming treatment is carried out at prescribed intervals The dog will not access the school dining hall at meal times; he will not be permitted into the food preparation area of the kitchen.
Claim is made against school re: behaviour of the dog.	Financial and reputational risk to School	**1**	**1**	**1**	All dogs are covered by the insurance policy of the supporting AAI Charity School has declared activity to its own insurance company as part of the School insurance policy requirements School strictly monitors compliance and adherence to the AAI Standards of Practice by the Owner

KEY:
1- Low risk
2
3 -Medium risk of injury
4
5-High risk of injury