

ROCKMOUNT PRIMARY SCHOOL

School Dog Risk Assessment

January 2024

The value of pet therapy is widely accepted as a powerful aid to communication and motivation. Research has shown that companion dogs can improve the wellbeing of children reducing their anxiety levels by making the school environment happier and a more enjoyable place to be. Dogs are a great comfort to children who are upset in any way and in need of calm, consolation, comfort, breathing space or a distraction before being able to tell an adult what has upset them. Children can benefit educationally and emotionally; a dog can motivate and encourage their participation, increase their understanding of responsibility, develop empathy and nurturing skills and improve their behaviour and self-esteem. Children cannot fail in any way in their relationship with a dog; they do not judge or condemn and offer unconditional affection. Children will learn the principles of good pet ownership and be taught how to handle dogs safely and responsibly; they will take great enjoyment from interaction with the dog. It is accepted that interacting with animals is not appropriate for all children but that for some it has the potential to provide many positive benefits. Any parent/ carer who does not wish their child to interact with the school dog is invited to write to Ms Burrige of their wishes. This risk assessment will be reviewed annually and the impact of a school dog will be evaluated by the Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team.

HAZARD	WHO IS AFFECTED/AT RISK	RISK RATING (LOW, MEDIUM, HIGH)	ACTIONS/CONTROL MEASURES	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
Bites, scratches or illness caused by the dog	Staff and pupils	LOW	<p>Sonny will always be in the care of a responsible adult and will never be allowed to freely roam the school premises unsupervised.</p> <p>Children will not be left with Sonny unsupervised.</p> <p>During the school day, Sonny will always be on a lead when he is out of the office area, except when he is supervised in an enclosed area.</p> <p>Sonny has received training and taught not to jump up or bite.</p> <p>Pupils have been, and continue to be, taught how to read dog behaviour and the impact of their actions. Education of this nature is continually given to children in whole school assemblies, specific workshops from outside professionals, including the Blue Cross / Dog Trust, during circle time and PSHE lessons.</p> <p>Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent Sonny from chasing them. (i.e. stand still with arms by their side – ‘ tall like a tree’).</p> <p>Sonny will attend the groomers’ regularly to make sure his claws are kept short and is also walked on concrete/tarmac to keep them trimmed.</p> <p>Sonny with Rebecca have undergone formal training with an experienced local dog trainer.</p> <p>All staff will have been introduced to the dog and the expectations (do’s and don’ts) of having a school dog.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rebecca, handler
Allergies	Staff and pupils	LOW/ MEDIUM	<p>Sonny is a Foxy Jack which is not considered a hypoallergenic dog however Foxy Jack’s do not shed excessively. Parents have been asked to inform the school of any known allergies prior to the introduction of the dog to classes. A list of any children who should not interact with Sonny will be kept by teachers and office staff.</p> <p>Fully supervised, children will have the opportunity to interact with Sonny as timetabled and those with allergies will be able to opt out of interaction.</p> <p>Children have been taught to wash their hands after interacting with Sonny. Wounds on exposed skin will be covered.</p> <p>Sonny will attend the vets’ regularly to ensure he is vaccinated, wormed and treated for fleas.</p> <p>Sonny will visit the groomers regularly.</p> <p>Should Sonny defecate on the school premises a member of staff will clear it up immediately and dispose of it in a safe manner. Poo bags will be carried by staff members walking the dog and pupils will be kept at a safe distance.</p> <p>Sonny will not be taken anywhere near food preparation areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rebecca

HAZARD	WHO IS AFFECTED/AT RISK	RISK RATING (LOW, MEDIUM, HIGH)	ACTIONS/CONTROL MEASURES	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
Phobias	Staff and pupils	LOW	<p>Parent/ carers have been asked to inform the school if their child is scared to be in close contact with dogs.</p> <p>Parent/ Carers will be directed to support for their child to help overcome aversion.</p> <p>Parents/ Carers are also offered the option of their child having no close contact.</p> <p>A list of any children who should not interact with Sonny will be kept by the teachers and office staff</p> <p>Information of Sonny will be provided on the school website for visitors and the school community.</p>	Teachers, handler
Damage caused to school materials, equipment and the school site	Sonny, school premises	LOW	<p>Sonny will always be in the care of a responsible adult and will never be allowed to freely roam the school premises unsupervised.</p> <p>Sonny will be kept in the office area with a security gate.</p> <p>Sonny with Rebecca have undergone formal training with an experienced local dog trainer.</p>	Rebecca, handler
Keeping safe when dog walking	Staff, pupils, Sonny	LOW	<p>A member of staff will always have the school dog on the lead and have responsibility to ensure that they have control of Sonny.</p> <p>Should Sonny defecate while out walking, the member of staff will clear this up immediately and dispose of it in a safe manner. Poo bags will be carried by staff member walking the dog and pupils will be kept at a safe distance.</p>	Handler
Germs from Sonny	Pupils, staff	LOW	<p>Sonny will attend the vets' regularly to ensure he is vaccinated, wormed and treated for fleas.</p> <p>If Sonny is sick, he will not come into school until he is better.</p>	Rebecca
Financial cost of the dog's upkeep	School is unable to afford the ongoing cost of Sonny's day-to-day upkeep or medical bills	LOW	<p>Sonny is the responsibility of Rebecca Burridge. She is financially responsible for all his care and day-to-day costs.</p> <p>Sonny is the responsibility of Rebecca Burridge outside of school hours.</p> <p>The school will accommodate costs towards training and assessment of Sonny to ensure he is safe in school.</p>	Rebecca, school
Claims made against school re: behaviour of the dog	School	LOW	<p>Sonny is insured with Pet Business Insurance. The certificate is kept in school office and renewed annually.</p>	Rebecca, school
Fire Alarm	Dog handler, Sonny	LOW	<p>Sonny will be signed in as a member of staff so fire marshals know when he is onsite.</p>	Rebecca, handler