

Risk assessment

St Edward's Catholic Academy

Therapy Dog, Frankie

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 relationship between children and dogs has been well documented for hundreds of years. Potential benefits from a child coming into contact with a dog consist of the following: - a child's best friend, a confidant, provides emotional support and love, promotes positive self-esteem, teaches responsibility and empathy, helps cope with death and loss and can have a lifelong influence on their attitudes towards animals.

Sigmund Freud believed that dogs had a 'special sense' that allowed them to judge a person's character. His dog Jo-Fi (a Chow) attended all his therapy sessions. Freud believed that the presence of his dog had a calming influence on all of his patients, especially children. It was the academic work of Boris Levinson and his dog Jingles in the 1960's that brought the world evidence that dogs were good for children but more importantly that they could help children overcome some traumas.

The rationale to have an Academy therapy Dog was as follows:

- For the school to have access to a pet therapy dog.
- For the animal to be properly cared for outside of the school day.
- To have a pet therapy dog that the students could interact with and also be of benefit to the students social and emotional development.

The dog lives with Mrs Jones in her home at her own expense and is to be introduced to the school environment and the Students gradually. A Vets' practice local to Mrs Jones has thoroughly checked the dog for any illnesses and is responsible for her vaccination programme. There are no diseases that could be caught from the dog as she is kept up to date with immunisations including rabies and her worming treatment is in line with national vet guidelines. A register of her annual health check is kept both by Mrs Jones and the vets' surgery.

It is accepted that interacting with the dog is not appropriate for all children but that for some it has the potential to provide many positive benefits. This risk assessment will be reviewed annually and the impact of a school dog will be evaluated by the school senior leadership team.

It is a requirement that as a Pet Therapy Dog the Owner follows these recommended guidelines:

- All animals should be regularly groomed and checked for signs of infection or other illness.
- Pets that are ill should be diagnosed and treated by a vet and should not be allowed in the school premises until their health is restored.
- All animals should have received relevant inoculations.
- All animals should be wormed regularly every six months.
- Claws should be kept trimmed to reduce the risk of scratches.
- Pets should have been exercised before being allowed to work with children.
- All pets should have their coats cleaned regularly.

The dog owner/handler has the responsibility to ensure that:

- Dogs are physically fit before visiting the school environment
- Dogs are kept on a lead throughout the visit/work
- They remain with the dog at all times
- The dog is discouraged from jumping, scratching and licking
- The dog is of an acceptable hygienic standard, i.e. not wet, muddy etc.
- Natural relief for dogs is taken into account prior to visiting

Hazard	Risk	Risk 1-5 *	Likelihood 1-5*	Controls in place	Review date
Dog getting over excited when interacting with students.	Students knocked to ground	1	1	The dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult and will never be allowed to freely roam the school premises.	Summer Term 2020
	Students scratched by Dog	1	2	Children are not left with the dog unsupervised.	
	Students bitten by Dog	5	1	<p>The dog will be trained not to jump up or bite the children.</p> <p>Students have been, and continue to be, taught the impact of their actions. Education of this nature is continually given to students, and often to whole school during assemblies, form time and PSHE lessons.</p> <p>Students will be taught what to do to prevent the dog from chasing them. (i.e. stand still, cross arms)</p> <p>The dog will attend the vets' regularly to make sure his claws are kept short and is also walked on concrete/tarmac to keep them trimmed.</p>	
The Dog gets loose from his pen or from his lead.	As above	1	2	<p>There are three members of staff who will be called upon in the event of the dog getting loose or if he needs attention at any other time, they are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mrs Jones 2. Mrs Hobson 3. Mrs McQuillan 	Summer Term 2020
Hazard	Risk	Risk 1-5 *	Likelihood 1-5*	Controls in place	Review date & signed
Dog hair causing allergies	Children have allergic reactions	1	1	<p>Parents/Carers have been asked to inform the school of any known allergies. A list of any children who should not interact with the dog will be kept by Mrs Jones</p> <p>Students will have the opportunity to interact with the dog as they wish and those with allergies will be able to opt out of interaction.</p> <p>Students will be told to wash their hands after active participation with the dog. There will be hand sanitiser available for students to use after contact with the dog</p>	Summer Term 2020

Children getting germs from the dog.	Children/staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs	1	1	<p>Should the dog defecate on the school site a member of staff will clear this up immediately and dispose of it in a safe manner. The area will then be disinfected with an appropriate animal disinfectant.</p> <p>All immunisations (including rabies vaccination) are kept up to date in accordance with European Pet Passport scheme and a register of this is kept by Mrs Jones and the vet practice which the dog is registered.</p> <p>Flea treatment is carried out monthly. Worming treatment is carried out in line with European Vet guidelines, at monthly intervals</p> <p>The dog will not go in the school dining hall at meal times; she will never go into the food preparation area of the kitchen.</p>	Summer Term 2020
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Non Health and Safety Risks

Hazard	Risk	Risk 1-5 *	Likelihood 1-5*	Controls in place	Review date
Financial cost of the dog's upkeep	School unable to afford ongoing cost of the dog's day to day upkeep or medical bills	1	1	<p>The dog is the responsibility of Mrs Jones she is financially responsible for all his care.</p> <p>The dog is the responsibility of Mrs Jones outside of school hours.</p>	Summer Term 2020
A claim is made against the Academy re: behaviour of the dog.	School not adequately covered financially	n/a		The academy's public liability insurance cover, covers the dog whilst on site and working with any students on site.	Summer Term 2020

KEY:

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