



Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School

Dogs in School Policy

Autumn 2025



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1. Introduction

At Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School, we recognise the potential emotional, social, and educational benefits that can arise from the carefully managed presence of a school dog. This policy outlines the protocols for keeping a dog on the school premises under the care of the Headteacher, ensuring the health, safety, and wellbeing of all pupils, staff, visitors, and the dog.

2. Purpose of the School Dog

The dog on site will not be used as a therapy dog but will form part of the wider school community under the close supervision of the Headteacher. The purpose of having a dog in school may include:

- Supporting pupils' wellbeing and emotional regulation;
- Promoting calm behaviour and social development;
- Encouraging confidence in reluctant readers through 'reading to the dog' sessions;
- Supporting pupils with anxiety or special educational needs;
- Creating a sense of joy and engagement across the school community.

3. Ownership and Responsibility

- The dog is personally owned by the Headteacher, who assumes full legal and financial responsibility, including:
 - Veterinary care and vaccinations;
 - Insurance cover;
 - Food and supplies;
 - Day-to-day care, including exercise and hygiene.
- The dog remains under the direct supervision of the Headteacher during school hours.

4. Health and Safety

A detailed **risk assessment** has been carried out and will be regularly reviewed. Control measures include:

- **Suitability of the Dog:** The dog has a suitable temperament for school life:
 - Appropriately trained;
 - Comfortable in busy environments;
 - Used to being around children of primary age.
- **Pupil Safety:**
 - Children will only have contact with the dog under supervision.
 - The dog will not enter classrooms uninvited.
 - The dog will not be used with pupils who express fear or anxiety unless appropriate support and desensitisation plans are in place.
- **Allergies and Phobias:**
 - Parents will be consulted prior to the dog being on site.
 - A register of pupils/staff with allergies or cynophobia will be maintained, and these individuals will not have contact with the dog.

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- Individual risk assessments will be completed where necessary.
- **Hygiene and Cleaning:**
 - Specific cleaning arrangements will be made for areas the dog uses.
 - Dog-free zones (e.g. kitchen, food areas, EYFS classrooms) are clearly designated.
 - All staff will be informed of protocols for cleaning in case of any accidents.
- **Food Safety:**
 - The dog will be kept away from all food preparation and consumption areas.
 - Pupils will be reminded to wash hands after any contact.

5. Welfare of the Dog

The dog's welfare will be a key consideration. Provision includes:

- A designated rest area (the Headteacher's office) where the dog can retreat.
- Access to water throughout the day.
- Breaks for exercise during the day.
- A clear plan should the dog become unwell during the school day.

6. Supervision and Access

- Pupils will only engage with the dog as part of supervised, planned activities.
- No child will be left alone with the dog.
- The dog will be on a lead when moving around the school site.

7. Insurance and Legal Considerations

- The Headteacher has secured appropriate **public liability insurance** for the dog's presence on school premises.
- The school's own public liability insurance has been checked to ensure coverage.

8. Incident Procedures

In the unlikely event of an incident involving the dog:

- First aid will be administered if required.
- The Headteacher will inform the parents of any child involved.
- A full report will be written, and the risk assessment reviewed.
- Veterinary care will be sought immediately if the dog is injured or becomes unwell.

9. Communication and Consent

- Parents will be informed of the presence of the school dog through newsletters and meetings.
- Opt-out consent forms will be provided for parents wishing to withdraw their child from any dog-related activities.

10. Monitoring and Review

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This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if necessary (e.g. following an incident). The school governing body will oversee the implementation and monitoring of this policy.