Rattlesden Primary Academy

School Dog 

Policy/Guidelines

Author:

Policy Agreed:

Review Date:

# School Dog Policy/Guidelines Purpose

**Dogs teach children responsibility**. Having to remember to feed, provide water and show support for a dog can give children a sense of importance and satisfaction that they can’t get from school or other chores. The relationship that develops can be life-changing for a child and a great support system as they themselves continue to grow and develop.

**Dogs teach children patience**. Dogs do not always do as they are told first time!

**Dogs teach children compassion**. Just like humans, dogs feel emotion and pain. They are prone to injuries and the infirmities of age during their relatively short lives.

**Dogs teach children about socialisation.** Like most of us, dogs are social animals who enjoy and need attention and affection. By learning how to interact with a dog, children can learn how to better socialise with other children.

**Dogs are fun.** Last, but certainly not least, dogs are a lot of fun. They greet you with a wagging tail every day and can cheer you up even on your worst day.

Many people have studied dogs in attempts to decipher their behaviour, and the theories abound. However, you just have to witness the interactions between dogs and children to realise the potential for greatness. Dogs can sense when children with epilepsy are about to have a seizure, they can sense when a diabetic child’s sugar is low, and they can help children with severe physical disabilities find happiness in life.

While we feel that exposure to pets is beneficial to most children, we are sensitive to the fact that some people are nervous of or allergic to dogs. Contact with Bella will be on a voluntary basis; no child will be forced to interact with the school dog. All parents have the choice to request that their child does not have close contact with Bella.

# Introduction

The Rattlesden Primary Academy School Dog ‘Bella’ has lived with Mr Vaughton and his family since she was 8 weeks old. She is very much a family dog but with the right temperament to work with a wide range of children and adults within the school environment. Bella regularly visits the vet for check-ups. Whilst she is there, they administer worm and flea treatments as well as making adjustments to her diet to ensure that she remains a healthy weight. As a Labradoodle, Bella does not moult and the breed is often described as being hypoallergenic. This means that any effect on children with allergies and asthma should be minimal. She is also groomed and bathed regularly to reduce any moulting and dander.

# Guidelines to interaction with the School Dog

Under no circumstances will children have close interaction with the school dog if their parents have raised concerns. Once permission has been given, no child shall be forced into interaction with the school dog if this makes them feel unhappy in any way. At all times interaction with the school dog must be controlled and safe for adults, children and the school dog herself. If the following guidelines are not followed interaction with the school dog will be cancelled. At all times of interaction there must be an authorised adult who takes the leading role when interacting with the school dog. If children, or visiting adults, do not abide by the guidance given by the authorised adult, the interaction will be cancelled.

The following guidelines must be followed when interacting with the school dog. These guidelines apply to all adults and children.

* Children must not be on their own with Bella.
* Never let Bella out of her crate without the express permission of a responsible adult.
* All interactions between pupils and Bella must be sanctioned by a responsible adult.
* If asleep, Bella must not be disturbed.
* Always approach the school dog calmly (voice and movement)
* Always approach the school dog slowly
* Never run up to the school dog
* To start interaction the back of a hand will be offered for the school dog to sniff
* Keep noise levels low during interaction with the school dog
* All interaction must remain calm
* The school dog’s resources can only be moved with the permission of a responsible adult.
* There must not be any interaction with the school dog whilst she is eating
* After all interaction with the school dog, hands must be washed with soap and water/ hand gel
* When interacting with the school dog, all children must remain on their feet and not kneel or lie down unless guided to by the authorised adult
* If the school dog is with an authorised adult she does not need to be on his lead when in school.
* Children may be asked to perform certain tasks to help supervise and look after Bella. These tasks will be age appropriate and suited to the individual capability and confidence of the child. The children will always have the option to decline taking part in an activity.