

## Specific Risk Assessment

**Area:** Kingstone & Thruxton Primary School - School Dog - Elsa

### **Introduction:**

Pet therapy is a guided interaction between a person and a trained animal. It also involves the animal's handler.

Pet therapy is also referred to as animal-assisted therapy (AAT). AAT is sometimes confused with animal-assisted activities (AAA). AAT is a formal, structured set of sessions that helps people reach specific goals in their treatment. AAA involves more casual meetings in which an animal and its handler interact with one or more people for comfort or recreation.

Pet therapy builds on the pre-existing human-animal bond. Interacting with a friendly pet can help many physical and mental issues. It can help reduce blood pressure and improve overall cardiovascular health. It can also release endorphins that produce a calming effect. This can help alleviate pain, reduce stress, and improve your overall psychological state.

The goals of a pet therapy program can include:

- increasing self-esteem
- increasing verbal communication
- developing social skills
- increasing willingness to join in activities
- improving interactions with others
- motivating willingness to exercise
- making you happier, lessening depression, and improving your outlook on life
- reducing anxiety because of its calming effects
- helping children learn empathic and nurturing skills
- improving motor skills and joint movement
- improving assisted or independent movement

The Leadership Team of The Kingstone Academy considered the options regarding the possibility of obtaining a dog as a school pet. Over a period of several months following this discussion, research into a possible source of a suitable puppy led to the final decision to introduce a puppy in January 2018.

The puppy will live with Mrs Hanson in her home and be introduced to the school environment and the children gradually. A local Vets' practice has thoroughly checked the puppy for any illnesses and she has completed her initial vaccination programme. There are no diseases that could be caught from the puppy as she is kept up-to-date with immunisations including rabies, and worming treatment is in line with European vet guidelines. A register of her annual health check is kept both by Mrs Hanson and the vets' surgery. 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 who does not wish their child to interact with the puppy is invited to write to inform Mrs Hanson 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.

1. Significant Hazards and Identification of Risks: <i>See overleaf. Add any significant hazards to the specified visit, activity or group</i>	2. Those who might be harmed: <i>Number and age of students participants, number of participating staff, any others at risk</i>	3. Control Measures: <i>Specific control measures not included in the generic risk assessment overleaf.</i>	4. Risk Rating: <i>Must be low otherwise reassess controls</i>
Dog getting over excited when interacting with children.	<p>Child/staff knocked to ground</p> <p>Child/staff scratched by Dog</p> <p>Child/staff bitten by Dog</p>	<p>The dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult and will never be allowed to freely roam the school premises unsupervised. Children are not left with the dog unsupervised. During the School day the dog will always be on a lead when she is out of her crate/ in Mrs Hanson's office, except when she is undergoing structured training with his primary trainer or is supervised in an enclosed area. The dog will be trained not to jump up or bite the children. 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, form time and PSHE lessons. Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent the dog from chasing them. (i.e. stand still with arms by their side – 'tall like a tree') 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. Mrs Hanson and dog will undergo formal training from the age of 10 weeks with an experienced local dog trainer. Small groups of pupils will be involved in both on and off site training (with parental permission) and along with the schools' primary handler, continue to reinforce positive training strategies in a controlled area throughout the week. The dog will also undergo conditioning to the school classroom environment, this area of training with allow future reading or nurture intervention to involve the school dog in a calming/therapeutic manner. Risk of scratching and biting will reduce and the risk assessment will be reviewed as the dog progresses through his weekly training programme. All staff will have been introduced to the dog and the expectations (do's and don'ts) of having a school dog</p>	<p>L</p> <p>L</p> <p>M</p>
The dog being a tripping hazard	Child/ staff/parent/ visitor	<p>All members of school community to be vigilant to look where they are walking to avoid tripping over the dog. The dog to be on a short lead when walking around school with a member of staff. If the dog is resting in a room / classroom etc. safely attached to lead – where possible passers-by informed.</p>	L
The dog gets loose from Mrs Hanson's office, his crate or from his lead.	<p>Child/staff knocked to ground</p> <p>Child/staff scratched by Dog</p> <p>Child/staff bitten by Dog</p>	<p>There is a stair gate at Mrs Hanson's door for when the door is open and the dog is in the room off the lead. In addition to this there is a crate in the room to separate from the meeting table if someone requests not to have contact with the dog. The dog's crate is big enough for her to be happy and safe during the school day and the children are taught not to tease her. If the dog does get loose from the office or her crate the teacher on duty will call for a designated staff member who will come and put the dog back in his crate. There are four members of staff who will be called upon in the event of the dog getting loose or if she needs attention at any other time, they are: 1. Mrs Hanson 2. Mrs Vigus 3. Ms Quinsey 4. Mrs Jones.</p>	<p>L</p> <p>M</p> <p>M</p>

Dog hair causing allergies	Children have allergic reactions	The school dog is a Goldendoodle which is a low/non-moulting breed to reduce the chance of an allergic reaction. 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 by Mrs Hanson and Office staff. Parents / Staff have been asked to highlight any allergies and a list of those who should not interact with the dog will be kept by Mrs Hanson and Office staff. Fully supervised, 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. Hand sanitiser will be kept in the areas where the dog will be kept. Wounds on exposed skin will be covered.	L
Children getting germs from the dog.	Children/staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs	Should the dog defecate on the school site a member of staff will clear this and dispose of it in a safe manner. Poo bags will be carried by staff member walking the dog. 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 Hanson. Flea treatment is carried out at 6 weekly intervals. Worming treatment is carried out in line with European Vet guidelines, at 6 monthly intervals. If the dog is sick she will not come into school until she is better. The dog will not enter the dining hall at meal times, she will never go into a food preparation area and/ or the kitchen.	L
Financial cost of the dog's upkeep	School unable to afford ongoing cost of the dog's day-to-day upkeep or medical bills or a claim made by a child.	The dog is the responsibility of Mrs Hanson. She is financially responsible for all her day-to-day costs. Dog training costs, medical insurance & public liability insurance will be paid for by the schools Young Hopefuls Project. The certificates are kept in school office and renewed annually.	L
Fire Alarm	Who has responsibility to remove dog from the building	Mrs Hanson will be responsible for removing the dog from site.	L
Noise / Barking	Pupils who can't cope with noise e.g. autistic children	Goldendoodle are bred to be sociable dogs and are often used as therapy dogs as they are known to be good with children. Dog will be introduced to the children from an early age so will be acclimatised to a noisy environment, therefore reducing the chance of her barking.	L
Dog Phobia	Distress caused by close proximity to dog	Parents have been asked to inform the school if their child is scared to be in close contact with the dog. Parents are offered a programme of support for a child to help overcome aversion. Parents also offered the option of their child having no close contact. A list of any children who should not interact with the dog will be kept by Mrs Hanson and Office staff. Visitors advised dog is in the office and removed if requested. Notice on school website.	L

Procedure(s) for ongoing risk assessment review (e.g. any special briefings): Reviewed Annually

Completed by: Elissa Vigus, Kelly Hanson and Steve Fisher

Date: 01/01/2018\_\_\_\_\_