

# **School Dog Policy**

## **2026-2027**

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|-------------------------|--------------|
| Approved by:            | Governors    |
| Last reviewed:          | July 2026    |
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| Responsible for review: | AHT - SENDco |

## **Contents**

- 1. Introduction and Purpose**
- 2. General Overview**
- 3. Roles and Responsibilities**
- 4. Fire Evacuation**
- 5. Risk Assessment**
- 6. Benefits of having a School dog**
- 7. Monitoring Arrangements**
- 8. Appendices**
  - a. Appendix 1 – School Dog Risk Assessment**

## **1. Introduction and Purpose**

At EKC Sheppey Secondary School we are committed to continually improving the quality of education and effectiveness of our school for our students. We believe our students will benefit both educationally and emotionally, whilst increasing their understanding of responsibility and further develop their empathy and nurturing skills through contact with a dog.

The dog is owned by EKC Sheppey Secondary School's Headteacher, Ms Lorman and all costs and responsibilities will be Ms Lorman's.

Fleur is a six-year-old Labrador known for her gentle, calm, and patient temperament. She is well-socialised and comfortable in busy environments. As a Labrador, Fleur is a shedding breed; however, she is groomed regularly to minimize dander. She is up-to-date with all vaccinations, deworming, and flea treatments.

EKC Sheppey Secondary's Board of Governors has agreed that the school can have a school dog.

All staff have been informed, through staff briefing, emails and completing relevant documents i.e. MS Team Forms that EKC Sheppey Secondary will be having a dog and asked to complete a MS Teams Form identifying any phobias and/or allergies to dogs.

Parent/Carers have also been informed and asked to complete a MS Teams Form identifying any phobias and/or allergies to dogs.

Staff/Students and visitors known to have allergic reactions to dogs must not go near Fleur.

This policy sets out the principles for EKC Sheppey Secondary School to have Fleur on school site and aims to:

- Detail roles and responsibilities
- Detail training for both staff, students and dog.
- Risk Assessment
- Outline the benefits of a school dog

## **2. General Overview**

Fleur will be joining EKC Sheppey Secondary School as our own school dog. Fleur is a six-year-old labrador who is qualified as a school dog.

### **2(a). Presence and Awareness**

- Site Notification: a sign will be displayed in reception when Fleur is on-site to ensure that all staff and visitors are aware.
- Internal Notification: a sign will be displayed on the SLT office door to ensure that all staff and students are aware that she is in the vicinity.
- Opt-Out Policy: no student or staff member will ever be forced to interact with Fleur. A register of 'no contact' students and staff (due to allergies, phobias, or parental preference) will be maintained and updated regularly.
- Dog-Free Zones: To support those with allergies or phobias, certain areas of the school shall remain Dog-Free Zones.

### **2(b) Interaction and Behaviour**

- Supervision: Fleur will always be under the full control and supervision of an adult and kept on a lead/harness when moving between classrooms, buildings, and the school site.
- Modelling Behaviour: staff are expected to lead by example in the presence of students and Fleur, remaining calm and professional at all times.
- The "Invite" Principle: students and staff must wait for Fleur to approach them or ask the handler's permission before touching her. They should always approach Fleur while standing up.

- Safe Boundaries: both staff and students are not to put their faces near Fleur, stare into her eyes, or make sudden movements, as this can be perceived as threatening.
- Rest Periods: when Fleur is on her "bed," she is officially "off-duty" and must not be approached by anyone.
- Do Not Disturb: staff and students should never go near or disturb Fleur when she is sleeping or eating and must not play roughly with her.
- Food Safety: children should not feed Fleur or eat close to her.

## **2(c) Health, Hygiene, and Maintenance**

- Illness: if Fleur is unwell, she will not be allowed in school.
- Allergy Protection: staff, visitors, and students known to have allergic reactions to dogs must not go near the dog.
- Hand Hygiene: students and staff must wash their hands after handling Fleur. The school will provide anti-bacterial gel or access to a sink with soap and warm water.
- Waste Management: any dog foul will be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately by an adult. A designated toilet area will be provided for Fleur.
- Administrative Support: EKC Sheppey Secondary School will provide regular training and information to the school community and maintain appropriate insurance.

## **2(d) Safety Monitoring and Crisis Management**

- Crowd Control: if Fleur is surrounded by a large number of students, she could become nervous. The supervising adult must monitor the situation and act accordingly.
- Reading Body Language: adults must be vigilant for signs of stress:
  - Angry/Threatened: growling or baring of teeth.
  - Frightened/Nervous: flattened ears, tail lowered or between legs, hiding, or whining.
- Immediate Withdrawal: if Fleur displays any warning signs, she must be immediately removed from that situation or environment.
- Incident Protocol: in the unlikely event that Fleur displays signs of significant stress, or if an incident occurs (e.g., a nip or a scratch), she will be removed from the site immediately and her suitability for the role will be formally reassessed by the Headteacher and the Board of Governors.

## **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

Overall, it will be the responsibility of the Deputy Headteacher, the dog's main handler to ensure this policy is adhered to.

The Governing Body also has a responsibility to ensure that the school has a written policy for dogs in school, which should be reviewed annually.

All staff and students are required to abide by this policy.

## **4. Fire Evacuation**

In the event of an emergency evacuation, Fleur's main handler, will accompany her to the Fire Evacuation point.

## **5. Risk Assessment**

A school dog risk assessment should be thorough addressing key factors i.e. health, safety and welfare for students, staff and the dog. Key controls involve keeping the dog under supervision of a trained adult, ensuring vaccination/flea treatment, managing allergies, teaching safe interaction, and providing a quiet space.

The risk assessment should be reviewed annually or immediately if significant changes occur.

The risk assessment should address health, safety, and welfare for students, staff, and the animal.

## 6. Benefits of having a School dog

A school dog provides significant emotional, academic and social benefits, including reduced stress and anxiety for students and staff, improved reading confidence, and enhanced behavioural regulation. These dogs foster empathy, responsibility, and increased engagement among students, offering unconditional support to improve overall mental wellbeing in a school environment.

### Key Benefits of a School Dog:

#### Emotional Support and Wellbeing:

- Reduced Stress and Anxiety
- Emotional Regulation
- Comforting Presence

#### Academic & Literacy Improvement:

- Enhanced focus
- Motivation
- Reduced stress and Anxiety

#### Social and Behavioural Development:

- Increased Empathy and Compassion
- Responsibility

#### Social Interaction

- Physical Benefits

These dogs often serve as a unique, non-judgmental member of the school community, creating a positive, nurturing atmosphere.

## 7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher. At every review, it will be approved by EKCSS Governing Body.

### Appendix 1 – School Dog Risk Assessment

| What is the Hazard | Who is at risk         | Level of risk | What are you already doing                                                                                                                                                                                       | Does anything else need to be done to control the risk | Action taken by whom and when                      |
|--------------------|------------------------|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Animal Phobias     | Staff and Young people | Low           | A list will be made of all young people and staff who have a phobia of dogs. Every effort will be made for the dog to be kept away from those with phobias at all times.                                         | No current additional measures needed                  | Handlers to be mindful of any identified students. |
| Allergies          | Staff and young people | Low           | A list will be made of all young people and staff that have allergies and the dog will be kept a respectable distance from those people at all times. The dog will be groomed and bathed regularly to reduce the | No current additional measures needed                  |                                                    |

|                                 |                                |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
|                                 |                                |     | level or allergens and dander in accordance with guidelines.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                       |  |
| Diseases and pathogens          | Staff and young people         | Low | The dog will be up to date with all vaccinations and will receive regular veterinary check ups. Anti bacterial hand gel / wipes will be available after handling the dog.<br>All young people are to sanitise their hands before and after their session.<br>Handler(s) to sanitise their hands before and after each session.<br>Handlers are to sanitise hands before changing over the dog to keep the lead clean.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | No current additional measured needed |  |
| Animal bites                    | Staff and young people         | Low | The dog has undergone training and testing for suitability by Best Behaviour School for Dogs and will receive regular assessments by Best Behaviour for School Dogs.<br>The school dog will be with a handler who has completed the Best Behaviour School for Dogs dog training course at all times.<br>All young people coming into contact with the dog will be shown how to interact with the dog appropriately.<br>Only when the handler deems the young person suitably responsible will they be able to interact with the dog.<br>The school dog will be on the lead at all times when with children.<br>No objects are to be removed from the dog's mouth by children e.g. balls, sticks, toys<br>The school dog will never be left unattended with children. | No current additional measured needed |  |
| Areas not accessible to the dog |                                | Low | The dog will not enter any food preparation areas within the school.<br>The dog will not enter the classrooms until training completed.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | No current additional measured needed |  |
| Violence to the dog             | Young people staff and the dog | Low | Handlers to be aware of any potential behaviours that may be displayed by the young people towards the dog and be aware of the behaviour management plan for them.<br>Behaviour expectations to be clearly identified to young people with regards to the                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | No current additional measured needed |  |

|                           |                        |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                 |  |
|---------------------------|------------------------|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|--|
|                           |                        |     | <p>school dog. Any infringements on behaviour expectations will lead to the young person being withdrawn from the activity</p> <p>There will be a list of all young people known to have a history of violence towards animals and they will not be able to take part in the activity</p> <p>The school dog will be with the handler at all times and all interactions closely supervised. The dog must be immediately removed from any potentially violent situation and be taken to a safe location.</p>                                                                          |                                                 |  |
| Dog Toileting Area        | Staff and Young People | Low | <p>Staff and students needs to be aware of the areas used for the dog when toileting.</p> <p>This area will be out of bounds to students</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Area will need to be cleaned in line with COSHH |  |
| Welfare of the school dog | School dog             | Low | <p>Water is to be accessible to the school dog at all times</p> <p>The school dog is to be on a healthy balanced diet</p> <p>Raw food diets are not permitted</p> <p>The school dog is to have regular rest and play breaks throughout the working day.</p> <p>24 hours away from school is required following any sickness / diarrhoea</p> <p>The school dog is not to be in school if it has any open wounds or injuries</p> <p>A minimum of 24 hours away from school is required following any sedation, this will be reviewed on a 1:1 basis in consultation with the vet.</p> |                                                 |  |