



Hiltingbury Junior School

Dog Policy 2025-2026

Review Cycle:-	Annually	
Date of Next Review:- September 2026	Signed:- Governor	Approver:- Head Teacher

Introduction

Children can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills through contact with a dog. In addition to these benefits, children take great enjoyment from interaction with a dog.

Is there a risk in bringing a dog into a school environment?

Yes there is, though there are a variety of risks / accidents, which can happen within the school environment which far exceed the number of injuries or incidents caused by a dog. This is addressed as a risk that needs to be managed. A thorough risk assessment has been carried out and this is included in this document.

Dogs are not allowed anywhere on the school site at any time unless specifically authorised by the Head Teacher. This includes drop off and collection times. This policy outlines measures put in place to allow the school dog only to be present.

School Policy

The School will continue to work together with the charity Helpful Hounds. Helpful Hounds are a registered charity that support in the selection, purchase, support and training delivery of registered therapy and assistance dogs. The allocated guardian is Mrs Batten. Helpful Hounds initially purchased the dog, Hugo and the school agreed to fundraise for the charity in order to reimburse the cost of him and the ongoing training. Helpful Hounds remain the registered owner of Hugo.

The School will continue to consult and receive specialist support and guidance with all aspects of keeping and looking after the school dog from Helpful Hounds. The welfare of the dog is continually considered to be paramount throughout.

- The dog is under the care of Miss Loosemore, Mrs Hartley, Mrs Batten, Mrs Gowland, Mrs Bailey, Mrs Rose or another specifically allocated staff member during school hours.
- Only a trained 'school dog' is allowed on the premises. All other untrained dogs must not come on site unless they are a known therapy or assistance dog and the Head Teacher has been informed beforehand. On these occasions the owner will take full liability for the dog.
- Hugo is a Labrador, chosen because it is an intelligent breed that will respond well to training and which is known to be good with children and is very sociable and friendly. They are also considered to be less excitable than some Poodle cross breeds. Hugo has come from a reputable Kennel Club breeder and full breeding history has been obtained. Helpful Hounds assisted in the breeder choice, litter and dog selection process.
- The Chair of Governors and the governing board agree that a school dog will benefit the children and staff of Hiltingbury Junior School.

- Staff, parents and children were informed by letter that a dog is in school. A risk assessment has been made and this is reviewed annually.
- Staff, visitors and children known to have allergic reactions to dogs must not go near the dog and a list of pupils and staff this effects is kept in school. All visitors are informed on arrival that there is a dog in school with signage at reception.
- If the dog is ill they will not be allowed into school.

School Dog Policy

- Hugo will have regular flea and worm treatments together with inoculations as per veterinary guidelines and in line with the guidance provided from Helpful Hounds. Certificates, where appropriate for these are held in School.
- If the dog sustains an injury at school, the school is liable for the treatment costs associated with the injury. If the school is negligent then an investigation will be undertaken and reviewed by the Governing Body.
- Children must never be left alone with the dog and there must be appropriate adult supervision at all times.
- Children should be taught and reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog. Children should remain calm around the dog. They should not make sudden movements and must never stare into a dog's eyes as this could be threatening for the dog. Children should not put their face near a dog and should always approach it standing up.
- Children should never go near or disturb the School dog when it is sleeping or eating. • Children should not and must not be allowed to play roughly with the dog.
- Everyone must wait until the dog is sitting or lying down before touching or stroking the dog. • If the dog is surrounded by a large number of children, the dog could become nervous and agitated. Therefore the adult in charge of the dog must ensure that s/he monitors the situation.
- Dogs express their feelings through their body language. Growling or bearing of teeth indicate that the dog is feeling angry or threatened. Flattened ears, tail lowered or between their legs, hiding behind their owner, whining or growling are signs that the dog is frightened or nervous. If the dog is displaying any of these warning signs the dog should be immediately removed from that particular situation or environment. • Children should not eat close to the dog.
- Children should be careful to stroke the dog on his body, chest, back and not by his face or top of head.
- Children will and should always wash their hands after handling a dog.
- Any dog foul is cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately by the adult in supervision of the dog.
- Parents consent to allow their children access to the dog depending on the children's needs and the dog's development.
- All visitors are informed about the dog on arrival.
- Office staff will relay visitor issues to the Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team.
- Appropriately trained staff will maintain records and anecdotal evidence of the work and impact of the school dog. These would include factual, non confidential records from Teachers, Teaching Assistants, Thrive and ELSA sessions.
- The school/office will know the whereabouts of the dog and which staff are supervising at all times. Once working in allocated sessions (6 months plus) Hugo will have a timetable/schedule as much as possible. This will include scheduled

rest time for the dog and walking times as required. This is allocated in accordance with guidance from Helpful Hounds.

- The dog is included in the fire evacuation and lock down procedures under the supervision of Mrs Batten / Mrs Gowland or the adult the dog is with.
- The dog will have its own dedicated space in school (outside and inside). Where the dog can relax. There will be everything the dog needs in these spaces. Bed/water bowl/toys etc... to ensure the welfare of the dog at all times.

Actions

If someone reports having an issue with the dog, this information must be passed to the Headteacher / Deputy Head / Business Manager as soon as possible. All concerns will be responded to by the Senior Leadership Team.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body has a responsibility to ensure that the school has a written policy for dogs in School.

The Head teacher is responsible for implementing this policy.

Teachers, staff, pupils, parents and visitors are required to abide by this policy.

The curriculum will support learning about dogs and how best to behave around our dog, Hugo. This will include highlighting that not all dogs are well trained and that caution must be used around unknown dogs outside school.

Appendix 1. Reasons to have a dog in school

In summary, academic research has shown that dogs working and helping in the school environment can achieve the following:-

- 1) Improve academic achievement
- 2) Increase literacy skills
- 3) Calming behaviours
- 4) Increase social skills and self-esteem
- 5) Increase confidence
- 6) Teach responsibility and respect to all life
- 7) Help prevent truancy
- 8) Motivate children who are often less attentive

The following information has been taken from a range of sources to provide further detail about the benefits of having a dog in school:

Education:

Dogs are incredibly calm and happy to have a student read to them or join a group of children in the library whilst they are having a book reading session. Dogs give unconditional acceptance, as they are non-judgmental, which is especially crucial to struggling, emerging readers. The dogs also provide confidence to children as they do not

make fun of them when they read, but above all they make amazing listeners, providing the children with a sense of comfort and love. Research has proved that students who read to dogs show an increase in reading levels, word recognition, a higher desire to read and write, and an increase in intra and interpersonal skills among the students they mix with.

Social Development:

Dogs in school offer an opportunity for improving social development. They are especially useful for teaching students social skills and responsibility. Specifically, schools are using dogs to help older students build self-esteem; learn about positive and negative reinforcement, responsibility, and boundaries. Older students use dogs to help communicate, teach kindness, and empower students.

With a dog in school, students have the opportunity to learn how to care for the animal. This includes walking and grooming. Researchers report that involving students in the daily care of classroom dogs is a positive experience, promoting their own daily care. The students also learn about responsibility, caring, and sharing when helping each other take care of a dog at school.

As a Reward:

Dogs are gentle and loving, but at the same time full of fun and enjoyment for the students. Those students who have performed incredibly well during the week or those who have made progress in a certain subject, or those who have achieved tasks set for them, will be (training continues currently) rewarded with spending time during lunch or break to interact with these dogs. Walking, grooming, playing and training are some of the responsibilities students are allowed to undertake with a trained adult. It has been proved that working and playing with a dog improves children's social skills and self-esteem.

Support Dogs can work with students on a one-one basis and will especially help those students who have been bullied, suffered trauma, going through upsetting/difficult times or even scared/phobic of dogs.

The dog will bring much joy and help to all the students they meet and are happy to provide plenty of caring social interaction to the students they are spending time with. Students who struggle with social interaction can find a reassuring companion in a dog.

Appendix 2

School Dog Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q Who is the legal owner of the dog and who pays for its costs?

A The legal owners are Helpful Hounds and the appointed Guardian of the dog is Mrs Batten; the school budget will support the up keep and staff training costs where appropriate.

Q Is the dog from a reputable breeder?

A Yes. The dog is from a breeder where both parents have been thoroughly vetted and has been specifically chosen for its temperament. All relevant breeding documentation has been checked at the time of visiting the dogs breeding premises. The dog is KC Registered.

Q Will the dog be a distraction?

A The dog is kept, when not working with children, in the Office areas / ELSA / The Nook.

These areas are separate from the classrooms / playground area to ensure it only comes into contact with children who are happy to have contact and have parental permission for this, under strict supervision.

Q Has a risk assessment been undertaken?

A Yes, we have carefully considered having a dog in school and sought advice from many sources, including other schools (Toynbee, Thornden and Endeavour) that successfully have a school dog(s) and a reputable dog behaviourist / appropriate School dog training.

Q Who is responsible for training?

A Appropriate professional training is delivered via Helpful Hounds and IMDT registered trainers and the dog will work towards being trained as a school dog.

Q How will the dog be toileted to ensure hygiene for all?

A In the interest of health and hygiene our school dog is toileted when taken out for short walks at the adjoining park and in a segregated area in the grounds. Only staff members will clear this away appropriately leaving no trace on the ground, cleaning the area with disinfectant if needed. The dog is exercised on the School grounds after toileting in a separate area.

Our policy of no dogs in the playground is still applicable as we are unable to put effective control measures in place that guarantee temperament and safety when children come into unsupervised contact with unknown dogs.

Q How will the dog's welfare be considered?

A The dog is walked regularly and given free time outside. Parents are able to give permission in advance to allow their child to be able to walk with a member of staff (including off site) and the dog during that time.

When not working with children, the dog is kept in the office area/ ELSA / Thrive room and will only have planned and supervised contact with children and visitors. The dog continues to be carefully trained over a period of time and will have unlimited access to food and water.

We will work carefully to ensure the dog's welfare is always considered. Continued advice and support is taken from Helpful Hounds.

Q My child is frightened of dogs; how will you manage this?

A Access to the dog is carefully managed and supervised and children do not need to have close contact with it. We hope to work closely with parents of children who are fearful of dogs to alleviate their fear and to teach them how to manage this.

Q How will this be managed where children have allergies?

A Children will not need to touch the dog, which will relieve the possibility of allergic reactions. We already manage a number of allergies at school and this is no different for children and adults that are allergic to dogs. Individual needs will always be met and we are happy to work with parents to put additional control measures in place for individual allergies. The dog is given a high quality food and regularly groomed to reduce allergens. Parents of children with allergies will have the option to opt out of 1 to 1 and small group sessions with the dog.