

PEARESWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL
DOGS IN SCHOOL
RISK ASSESSMENT

Introduction:

The value of pet ‘therapy’ is widely accepted as a powerful aid to stimulation and communication. Studies have shown that the presence of companion animals can improve the well-being of children and lower the rate of anxiety, simply by making the environment happier, more enjoyable, and less forbidding.

The rationale behind this decision was as follows:

- For the school to have a pet that was able to live as naturally as conditions would allow.
- For the animal to be properly cared for outside of the school day.
- To have a pet that the children could interact with and be of benefit to the children’s social and emotional development.

It is accepted that interacting with animals is not appropriate for all children but for some it has the potential to provide many positive benefits. Any parent who does not want their child to interact with the dog is invited to write to Mrs Ferla and inform them of their wishes. There are no diseases associated with the dog as her vet will be responsible for vaccinations completing regular health checks and necessary treatment. A copy of the dog’s health records will be updated and kept in school. The dog will also be insured.

The risk assessment below is a working document and will be checked annually by key staff.

Hazard	Risk	Risk 1 - 5	Controls in place	Review date
Dog getting over excited when interacting with children.	Child knocked to the ground.	2	The dog will always be in the care of the designated handler or a “responsible adult”. “Responsible Adult” shall mean any member of staff who has read the policy fully, received appropriate training and is aware of the risks and responsibilities to both children and staff. The dog will never be left unattended. The dog will never be allowed to roam freely around the school premises. The dog must not be passed to any member of staff not deemed a “responsible adult” as defined above. Children will not be left unsupervised	Sept 2026
	Child scratched by dog. Child bitten by dog.	4		

Date Reviewed Sept 2025

			with the dog.	
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			The dog will always be on a lead when moving between classrooms or on a walk by the designated handler or responsible adult while the children are in school. Pupils have been and will continue to be taught about the consequences of their actions. Education of this nature is continually given to children, and often to the whole school through assemblies and PSHE sessions. Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent the dog from chasing them. The dog has undergone formal training from the age of 14 weeks with an experienced dog trainer. Evidence is recorded and kept in school. Risk of scratching and biting will reduce, and the risk assessment will be reviewed as she progresses through her weekly training. Evidence must be recorded and kept in school. All staff will have been introduced to the dog and expectations of having a school dog. The designated handler will ensure the dog attends the vets regularly to ensure she is in good health and that her claws are kept short. Evidence must be recorded and kept in school.	
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Date Reviewed Sept 2025

			The room where the dog is kept will have a sign on the door to inform others that the dog is present. The room where the dog is kept must have a lock on it out of the reach of children, and the door must be locked if the dog is in there on their own. The room where the dog is kept has a doorbell. All staff and children know that they ring the doorbell. This enables the adults to prepare the dog for visitors.	
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Date Reviewed Sept 2025

The dog causing allergies.	Children or staff have allergic reactions	1	Parents have been asked to inform the school of any known allergies before the introduction of the dog to the school. If required a list of any children/staff who should not interact with the dog will kept in school. The children will have the opportunity to interact with the dog under the supervision of the designated handler or responsible adult and those with allergies will be able to opt out of interaction. Children will be taught to wash their hands after active participation with the dog.	Sept 2026
Children getting germs from the dog.	Children or staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs.	1	Should the dog defecate on the school site a member of staff will clear this up immediately and dispose of it in a safe way. She will be trained to toilet in an area of the grounds that children have limited access to. The area will be disinfected as required. All immunisations are kept up to date in accordance with the European Pet Passport Scheme and a record will be kept of this. Evidence must be recorded and kept in school. Flea treatment is carried out at 4 week intervals and is recorded. Evidence must be recorded and kept in school.	Sept 2026



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			The dog will not be allowed in the school dining hall at mealtimes, and never in the food preparation area. The dog will be regularly wormed. Evidence must be recorded and kept in school.	
Noise/barking	Some children unable to cope with the noise	1	The dog is being introduced into the school environment from an early age so will be used to a noisy environment so is less likely to bark. Extra orientation sessions in place for specific children. Ensuring some children have ear defenders if needed.	Sept 2026
Financial cost of the dog's upkeep.	School unable to afford the ongoing cost of the Dog's day to day upkeep or medical bills.	3	The dog has been insured by the school, for Public Liability Insurance through Cliverton Insurance. All vets costs are covered by 'Pet Plan' under her private insurance paid for by the school. The school's budget has been adjusted to include the costs of having the dog.	Sept 2026



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Key: 1 Low risk 3 medium risk of injury 5 high risk of injury