

# **SCHOOL DOG RISK ASSESSMENT – SEPTEMBER 2020**



## **CAPENHURST C.E. (CONTROLLED) PRIMARY SCHOOL**



**LOLA**

**September 2020**

## **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.

## **Background**

The senior leadership team considered the options regarding the possibility of obtaining a dog as a pet in June 2020. After having Tuco, a therapy dog in school, where only a few children experienced the benefits of a dog in school at a great expense to the school, it seemed to make more sense to have our own school dog where all children could benefit.

Mrs Bunting undertook much research into a possible source of a suitable puppy for the school – finding a breed of dog that not only was calm in temperament but also has a low shedding coat.

Prior to purchasing the puppy, Mrs Bunting visited the home of the dog's parents to ensure that the temperament of the parents was suitable for interaction with children. Lola, the cockapoo, lives with Mrs Bunting and her family and will be introduced to the school environment and the children gradually.

A local veterinarian practice will thoroughly check the puppy for any illnesses and is responsible for her vaccination programme. There are no diseases that could be caught from the puppy as she will be kept up to date with immunisations and her worming and flea treatment is in line with European vet guidelines. Both the school and vets' surgery will keep a register of her annual health check.

Lola has already undertaken puppy training (a 6 week course) with Merlin Dog Training, run by Carol Smith. She is currently undertaking further training, again by the same trainer, and will continue with this training with a view to her being able to pass the 'Therapy Dog Temperament Assessment' in time.

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 inform the school of their wishes. This risk assessment will be reviewed annually and the school senior leadership team will evaluate the impact of a school dog on a regular basis.

Hazard	Risk	Risk 1-5	Controls in place	Review date & signed
Dog getting over excited when interacting with children.	<p>Child knocked to the ground.</p> <p>Child scratched by the dog.</p> <p>Child bitten by the dog</p>	<p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>5</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.</p> <p>Children are not left with the dog unsupervised.</p> <p>The dog will always be on a lead when she is out of her pen, except when she is undergoing structured training with her primary trainer/s.</p> <p>The dog will be trained not to jump up or mouth the children.</p> <p>Pupils have been, and continue to be, taught the impact of their actions. Education of this nature is continually given to children, and often to whole school during assemblies, form time and PSHE lessons. Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent the dog from chasing them. (i.e. stand still, cross arms)</p> <p>The dog will undergo formal training from the age of 11 weeks with an experienced local trainer. Some pupils will be involved in training (with parental permissions) and along with the schools' primary handlers, 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 will allow future reading or nurture intervention to involve the school dog in a calming/therapeutic manner. Risk of scratching and mouthing will reduce and the risk assessment will be reviewed as the dog progresses through her weekly training programme. ALL staff have been introduced to the dog and the expectations (do's and don'ts) of having a school dog.</p> <p>The dog will attend the groomers and vets' regularly to make sure her claws are kept short and that she is in good health.</p>	
The dog gets loose from her pen or from her lead.	As above	1	<p>The dog's crate/space 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 her pen the teacher on duty will call for a designated staff member who will come and put the dog back in her pen. There are</p>	

			<p>three 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:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mrs Vicky Bunting</li> <li>2. Miss Lesley McColl</li> <li>3. Mrs Claire Green</li> </ol>	
Dog hair causing allergies	Children/staff have allergic reactions	1	<p>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 on the school recording system. Staff will inform the head teacher of any allergies and precautions will be made as necessary.</p> <p>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 will have been taught to wash their hands after active participation with the dog.</p>	
Children getting germs from the dog	Children/ staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs	1	<p>Should the dog defecate on the school site a member of staff will clear this up immediately and dispose of it in a safe manner. The dog will be trained to toilet in an area of the school that our pupil's don't have access to on a regular basis if required the area will then be disinfected with an appropriate animal disinfectant.</p> <p>All immunisations are kept up to date and the Head Teacher keeps a register of this. Flea treatment is carried out at monthly intervals. Worming treatment is carried out monthly until 6 months when treatment will be at 3 monthly intervals.</p> <p>School will be mindful of any religious observances in regards to the cleanliness of having a dog in school and will contact parents if, for example, a child gets licked by the dog.</p> <p>The dog will remain in her crate at meal times or be taken for a walk outside the school grounds by a member of staff; she will not be permitted into the food preparation area of the kitchen.</p>	
Financial cost of the dog's upkeep	School unable to afford ongoing cost of the dog's day to day upkeep or medical bills	1	<p>The dog is the responsibility of Mrs Bunting, she is financially responsible for her care and day to day costs.</p> <p>The dog is the responsibility of Mrs Vicky Bunting outside of school hours.</p>	

			<p>Training costs will be paid for by the school as a high level of obedience training will need to be carried out.</p> <p>As the dog will be used for 'therapy' work within the school, the school will accommodate costs towards training and assessment of the dog to meet these criteria.</p> <p>The school will cover the cost of equipment needed to support the dog and its training in school. Veterinary costs will be paid by the owner, Mrs Vicky Bunting, with the exception of non-essential veterinary costs required by the school.</p>	
Claim is made against the school re behaviour of the dog.	School not adequately covered financially.	1	<p>Mrs Bunting insures the dog. The certificate is kept in the school office and is renewed annually in August.</p> <p>The Insurance team from the LA have stated that any claim against the school will be covered by school's insurance as the dog would be part of everyday school activities (this depends on the school having a robust risk assessment in place).</p>	

KEY:

- 1 = Low risk
- 2 =
- 3 = Medium risk
- 4 =
- 5 = High risk