



## Buddy Dog Policy



**2024-2025**

**Approved by:** Headteacher

**Date:** 4<sup>th</sup> September 2024

**Last reviewed on:** September 2024

**Next review due  
by:** September 2025

## **Introduction**

A few days each week, Hale Preparatory School will welcome Beryl, a small, friendly, well-bred, and well-trained miniature wire-haired dachshund. She will always be supervised by an adult and stay in the school office until she goes to work. Beryl has spent the last year working in a primary school, listening to children read, taking registers and messages around school with very willing and eager pupil volunteers, going on school trips, and making everyone smile.

Beryl has done well in her first year as a school dog and is very suited to the work. She is already a registered P.A.T dog (Pets as therapy) and is working toward becoming a fully trained assistance dog.

The school understands that having dogs on-site brings emotional and educational benefits for young people, especially pupils who cannot keep a dog at home, maybe anxious or upset, or have disabilities and special needs. It is also another way of learning about responsibilities by looking after and interacting with animals.

The Read2Dogs scheme provided by Pets as Therapy (PAT) helps to improve literacy skills and well-being in young people by developing their confidence, interest, and enjoyment in reading. Some students feel incredibly nervous and stressed when asked to read aloud, whether in a classroom or having a one-to-one session with a teacher. When a PAT Dog is in school, their presence can boost a young person's motivation and morale. Dogs are non-judgemental and great listeners - they don't interrupt or correct - so they aid confidence and concentration levels. PAT Dogs also encourage positive social behaviours, enhance self-esteem and inspire young people to relax and have fun.

Having a school dog brings many benefits to school life, but dogs are not for everyone or suitable for everyone for various reasons. Therefore, careful consideration is given to parental consent and the care and location of Beryl whilst she is on the school site.

This policy examines the associated risks of working with or near dogs. It ensures that all elements that could cause risks to pupils, members of staff, and visitors and possible subsequent legal actions are covered.

Overall, this policy is designed to promote safety for all and ensure adequate systems are in place to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of all people and animals kept at the school.

## **PURPOSE OF POLICY**

- The purpose of this Dog Handling Policy is to guarantee safe procedures related to the control, keeping, and handling of Beryl. This is for the benefit of members of staff and pupils when working near or with animals.
- To generate information and guidelines and to avoid risks and consequences affiliated with school dogs or in handling the animals in an educational role. It also covers information about the keeping of animals and related matters.

- To indicate what working or learning with dogs is, and highlight limitations when working with them and how to minimise possible risk before, during, and after an incident that may occur. That is, to identify what is deemed appropriate and what is not.

## **Headteacher's Responsibilities**

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring arrangements to enable safety during working or learning with or near dogs. In particular, to help identify risks, ensure regular risk assessments are carried out, and adequate control measures are introduced and implemented.

The Headteacher:

- Make Ensure agreed procedures for reporting related problems function efficiently and effectively.
- Seek advice, when appropriate, from outside agencies that can offer expert opinions (e.g., HSE, DFE, RSPCA, etc.).
- Stop what is considered unsafe practice or any other circumstances that could result in an unsafe situation while ensuring that staff are suited to working with dogs for identified activities and areas.
- Ensure that the policy, its codes of practice, risk assessment information, and guidance notes are readily available for users' reference and undertaken regularly.

## **Areas of Assessment**

- Beryl will be vaccinated and in good health, registered with the Kennel Club and a vet practice, and have an assessment for suitability completed before working in the school.
- The room temperature should be monitored, and a fan or additional heating should be provided if required in dogs' resting areas.
- Feeding animals should only be handled by trained staff members, and pupils should never be allowed to eat near animals nor participate in non-supervised feeding of animals.

## **Classrooms and teaching areas**

- Beryl will, on occasion, visit classrooms if it is appropriate. She will be supervised or carried by a trained member of staff at all times. However, contact will mainly occur in the school office or on the playground with small numbers of children at a time.

## **Existing health conditions**

- Any pupils and staff members with dog allergies should be considered, which should be addressed in the general risk assessment. Furthermore, people with possible allergies should also be identified.
- Any issue related to possible dog phobia or pupils or staff uncomfortable in the presence of dogs should also be noted, and arrangements should be made accordingly.
- Pupils with asthma and other respiratory illnesses should be risk assessed as part of their medical management.
- Pupils with existing cuts or wounds on exposed skin should have these covered when near or handling dogs.

## **Hygiene**

- Cleaning all areas where dogs are kept or moved around should be undertaken regularly. This includes bedding, cages, etc.
- Any soiled items and litter/waste items are to be disposed of accordingly.
- All people and pupils handling dogs should go through regular hand washing practices and adequate provision of available washing facilities.

## **Dog food**

- Dog food should be kept locked and stored in specific areas to limit access and reduce the risk of cross-contamination.
- Specific staff members will have to be made responsible for the evacuations of animals during fire drills and when the fire alarms go off.
- Beryl will have regular breaks to rest.

## **Supervision**

- Beryl will be supervised at all times.
- The number of pupils around a dog at any time will be limited.
- All pupils, after handling animals, should be thoroughly supervised with hand washing and general hygiene.

## **Training**

- Beryl will receive ongoing training and support from a specialist animal behaviourist.
- Pupils will be clearly instructed in all related matters to handle animals and how to behave around dogs.



## Hale Preparatory School. Buddy Dog (BD) Risk Assessment. September 2023

Likelihood 5 = Very Likely 4= Likely 3= Unlikely 2=Very Unlikely 1=Highly Likely

Severity 5= Fatality 4=Major 3= Moderate 2= Minor 1 = Insignificant

Risk Rating L= Low M=Medium H=High

Key Activity & Possible Hazard	Who might? be harmed	Likelihood	Severity	Risk Rating	Controls
BD getting over excited or distressed resulting in someone being: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Knocked down</li> <li>2) Scratched</li> <li>3) Bitten.</li> </ul>	Children Staff Visitors	2	2	M/L	<p>BD will be supervised by a trained adult when not in the care of Head teacher.</p> <p>BD will only work for a maximum of three hours in one day, rest in a quiet space in the afternoons and will not be in school full time.</p> <p>BD will always be in the care of a responsible adult.</p> <p>BD will be removed for time out if he becomes distressed or tired.</p> <p>BD will never be left alone with children.</p> <p>Children will be taught how to handle themselves around dogs in order to prevent behaviour that might over excite the BD.</p> <p>BD has undergone training with an experienced accredited dog trainer, this training is reinforced by adults in school.</p> <p>All staff have been guided regarding the correct way to handle BD.</p> <p>The school's choice of BD will be small and less likely to knock over a child or cause anxiety.</p> <p>BD will have specific and additional school dog insurance.</p>

Allergic reactions to BD's hair or saliva.	Children Staff Visitors	2	2	L	<p>Children are taught to wash their hands after handling BD.</p> <p>Parents/Carers have indicated any known allergies in writing and will notify school if they do not wish their child to come into contact with the BD.</p> <p>Children who have allergies will not be able to interact with BD unless parental/carer permission to do so has been given.</p>
Contracting diseases carried by dogs.	Staff Children Visitors	2	2	L	<p>BD will regularly attend health checks at vets to ensure she is healthy and well. Any signs of poor health BD will be seen by the vet as soon as is practically possible.</p> <p>All immunisation treatments are kept up to date, and a register of this is kept by the Headteacher.</p> <p>The nominated responsible adult will immediately and safely clear and dispose of faeces.</p> <p>BD will never enter the school Kitchen or be present when the children are eating.</p>