



# Solefield School

## Policy on Dogs on School Grounds

### **Aims**

To ensure the safety and well-being of pupils, staff and visitors to the school and to minimise the risk of accident or injury to people or animals within the school grounds.

### **The context of the policy:**

Governors and staff recognise that dogs are an important part of life for some of our families and, as such, are often included in day-to-day activities such as walking children to and from school. In our teaching we promote the relationship between people and their pets and accept and encourage the idea of pets as 'family members'. We do see pet ownership as a valuable educational experience for children. It also recognises that some staff who reside on site are dog owners.

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 school also acknowledges the views of families who have chosen not to have dogs or other pets. They also recognise that bringing dogs onto the premises might pose a health and safety risk to our pupils and others on site and could be unsettling for many as they arrive and leave school. There are added risks of dogs fouling, dogs biting or showing aggressive unpredictable behaviour.

The School recognises that even well-behaved dogs can behave unpredictably when placed in an unfamiliar, busy, noisy and crowded school environment and that this can lead to unexpected behaviour in even the best-behaved pet. Children can also behave unpredictably when in the presence of dogs especially where they are not used to being with them.

It is in considering this context that this Policy and Code of Conduct has been drafted.

### **Code of Conduct**

The School requires all staff, parents and any visitors intending to bring their dogs to school must adhere to this Code of Conduct which states:

- **It is understood that bringing dogs to school is a privilege not a right and is done at the absolute discretion of the Governors.**

- No visiting dogs is allowed beyond the gate at the top of the school drive and must be kept on a lead that keeps the dog reasonably close to the adult who is control of them;
- In the interests of clarity: no dogs accompanying children to and from school, other than assistance dogs, are allowed inside any school buildings. Only dogs resident on the School site or assistance dogs who have been subject of a completed and approved risk assessment are allowed onto the playground or inside school buildings;
- Visiting dogs must not be left unsupervised on the school premises and must not be left in the sole care of anyone under the age of 18. No dog can be tied up and left unattended on or near the school site other than securely in the bike area at the bottom of the drive; where this is the case, dogs should be kept away from entry ways so that children have a choice whether they want to come in direct contact with dogs;
- Unsupervised resident or assistance dogs must be secured in an appropriate crate when on the school site;
- If any parent or pupil object to the animal's presence on the school drive, then arrangements must be made to ensure that this animal is kept away from them. If necessary, the animal may need exclusion from specific areas;
- The adult bringing the dog on site is responsible for cleaning up and removing from site any soiling by their dog on the school grounds and failure to do so will mean the dog will no longer be allowed in the school grounds (N.B. dog waste must not be put into the school bins);
- All dogs coming onto School grounds must be properly vaccinated and treated for fleas and other parasites, regularly groomed and checked for signs of infection or other illness and claws should be kept trimmed to reduce the risk of scratches;
- Pets that are ill should be diagnosed and treated by a vet and should not be allowed in the school premises until their health is restored.
- **When bringing dogs on to the site, dog owners do so with an absolute understanding that their dog has no issues around children, has never displayed any aggression towards children or others and that the owner believes the dog is fully trustworthy in a school environment.**

Helen McClure  
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