EAST BARNET SCHOOL

"I want to learn"

School Pet Policy

Version 1.2

Review by People Committee:	January2026
Adopted by Governing Body:	March 2026
Reviewer:	L. Coffill
Governor Link:	Chair of People

SCHOOL PET POLICY

East Barnet School, Chestnut Grove, East Barnet, Herts EN4 8PU

A. Statement of Principle

Research shows that interaction with animals allows children to:

- benefit educationally and emotionally
- increase their understanding of responsibility
- develop empathy and nurturing skills
- take great enjoyment in human and animal interaction

At East Barnet School we have chosen to introduce a school dog, called Percy, to support the Inclusion and pastoral teams in bringing all of these benefits and more to our students.

Our school dog has undertaken puppy training and is receiving further specialist training towards certification from the School Therapy Dog Association.

In addition to this, the school also has visiting rabbits, Rex and Jessie that visit the Student Hub two-three times a week.

B. Staff Responsibilities

- If the dog is too unwell to attend school, he will remain at home.
- The dog must be kept on a lead when moving between classrooms or on a walk and will be under the full control and supervision of a trained adult.
- The dog will be kept in Miss Coffill's office or the Student Hub when not interacting with students in a session or on a 1:1 basis.
- Staff, visitors and children known to have allergic reactions to dogs must not have close contact with the dog.
- The school will seek information regarding allergies, once parents/carers are informed of the school dog, this information will be stored on Bromcom. For all staff to access.

- If a child who has been unaware of a possible allergy has a reaction that could be an allergic reaction after contact with the dog, even if minor symptoms, parents will be informed.
- Students will be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog before any interaction during a session or visit.
- If the dog is surrounded by many children, the dog could become nervous and agitated. Therefore, the adult in charge of the dog must ensure that they monitor the situation. If the dog is displaying any warning signs such as growling or flattening of his ears, he should be immediately removed from that situation or environment by the trained staff member handling him.
- Any dog foul should be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately by the trained dog handling staff only.
- Key staff will maintain records and anecdotal evidence of the work and impact of the school dog to better inform research into the benefits of a school dog.
- The school rabbits will have a run/hutch in the Student Hub that is locked and cleaned on a weekly basis. The litter tray will be changed after each visit.
- Staff will supervise students holding the rabbits and will only be allowed to do so if permission is given by a member of staff in the Student Hub.

C. Student Responsibilities

- Students are not allowed to play roughly with the dog.
- Students are not allowed to eat during sessions with the dog or the rabbits.
- Students must always wash their hands after handling / stroking the dog and the rabbits.
- Any deliberate violence or threatening behaviour towards the dog or rabbits will be dealt with in line with the school behaviour policy.

D. Monitoring and Evaluation

The effectiveness of this policy will be regularly monitored by the Deputy Headteacher, the Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body. This policy and any subsequent procedures will ensure the confidentiality, integrity and availability of the system and how any personal data is processed.

E. Implementation and Review

This policy will be circulated to all school staff and published on the school website for parent/carer information. The policy will be reviewed annually or if guidance is updated.

F. Supporting Guidance

This policy has been written with reference to the most up to date advice from The Dogs Trust, The School Therapy Dog Association and with the health and safety of the pupils and the dog at the very centre.

Please see the following appendices for more information.

- APPENDIX 1 – Benefits of having a dog in school.
- APPENDIX 2 – Frequently Asked Questions
- APPENDIX 3 – Risk Assessment

MY NAME IS
PERCY
Please let us know if you have allergies or concerns about dogs
I WORK HERE!
I'm hypoallergenic and super friendly

Benefits of Having a Dog in School

In summary, having the dog working and helping in the school environment we would like to achieve the following:

- Improve academic achievement
- Increase literacy skills
- Calming behaviours and positive attachments
- Increase social skills and self-esteem
- Increase confidence
- Teach responsibility and respect to all life
- Help prevent truancy and improve attendance
- Motivate children who are often less attentive

COGNITIVE

Companionship with a dog stimulates memory, problem solving and game playing.

BEHAVIOURAL

Behaviour problems occur in school, and these can interfere with learning. We would hope that by having the dog in school we would see a difference in the behaviour of pupils in terms of improved attitude toward school and learning, and pupils also showed more confidence and responsibility. If pupils can identify with animals, and with empathy for the dog, then can hopefully better understand how classmates may feel.

SOCIAL

A dog provides a positive mutual topic for discussion, encourages responsibility, wellbeing and focused interaction with others. After experiencing unconditional love and trust from a dog we would expect to see enhanced relationships with peers and staff. Dogs in school offer an opportunity for improving social development. They are especially useful for teaching student's social skills and responsibility. Specifically, schools are using dogs to help build self-esteem; learn about positive and negative reinforcement, teach kindness, responsibility, and boundaries. With a dog in school, pupils have the opportunity to learn how to care for the animal. The pupils also learn about responsibility, caring, and sharing when helping each other take care of a dog at school.

EMOTIONAL

A school dog improves self-esteem, acceptance from others and lifts mood, often provoking laughter and fun. Dogs can also teach compassion and respect for other living things as well as relieving anxiety. Students would learn how to express their feelings and enter more trusting relationships.

Students encouraged to gently pat or talk to the dog to teach sensitive touch and to help them to be calm and promotes provides tactile stimulation.

ENVIRONMENTAL

A dog increases the sense of a family environment, being part of something, another purpose for coming to school. Some of these benefits listed above will continue for the young person long after the school day is over.

It will hopefully also boost the student's connection to the school environment.

ACADEMIC

Reading to dogs has been proven to help children develop their literacy skills and build confidence in reading. Children who might be embarrassed to read aloud to the class or even adults are likely to be less scared to read to a dog. Dogs are used to encourage struggling readers to practice reading aloud This activity can create a calming effect on the pupil, as well the dog will listen to the pupil read with no judgement or criticism and they make amazing listeners, providing the children with a sense of

comfort and love. This in turn creates an environment where a student's enthusiasm for reading can grow an also develop the confidence to read aloud. The dog will be able to support reluctant readers.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Students will have opportunity to walk the dog on school grounds with supervision from one of the team. This in turn would allow for a potential improvement in student's attendance as they have a responsibility to the dog.

ATTENDANCE

We would see an improvement in attendance for students given some additional responsibility regarding the dog. It is also another reason for the student to want to come to school.

OVERCOMING PHOBIAS

There are students who do have dog phobias, a school dog and careful de-sensitisation programme could help to reduce some of these fears.

School Dog Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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

  The legal owner of the dog will be Miss Coffill and her family. She will bear the costs associated with owning the dog.

- **Is the dog from a reputable breeder?**

  Yes and the dog is from a home where both parents were seen and has been specifically chosen for its temperament.

- **Will the dog be a distraction?**

  When in school the dog will be based in Miss Coffill's office or the hub where he will have access to a quiet space.

- **Has a risk assessment been undertaken?**

  Yes, we have carefully considered having a dog in school and sought advice from many sources, including local schools that have successfully integrated a school dog.

- **Who is responsible for training?**

  Miss Coffill, will be responsible for its training. Appropriate professional training will be obtained, and the dog will work towards being trained as a school dog, he will work towards completing certification from PAWS. PAWS - Therapy Dog Training & Animal Assisted Therapy

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

  In the interest of health and hygiene our school dog will be toileted when taken out for short walks in the grounds. Only staff members will clear this away appropriately leaving no trace on the ground, cleaning the area with disinfectant if needed.

- **How will the dog's welfare be considered?**

  The dog will be well looked after. He will live with Miss Coffill who will bring the dog into school. He has undertaken puppy training classes, will be fully vaccinated and will visit the vet regularly for all the necessary injections, as well as regular check-ups. He will be fully insured. If

unwell for any reason she will stay at home. He will be walked, fed and hydrated during the day.

- **How will this be managed where children have allergies?**

  We already manage a number of allergies at school and this will be 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. (See Risk Assessment). The breed of dog is known for minimal moulting, he is given a high-quality food and regularly groomed to reduce any possibility of allergens.

  It is completely understandable that there will be some concerns about possible allergic reactions to a school dog. The dog will be subjected to a very thorough cleanliness and grooming regime. He is also a hypo allergenic breed that is well known to be good with families with allergies. The dog will only work with pupils who have expressed an interest to do so and after discussion with the Inclusion team as to whether it would be a beneficial intervention. Permission would be sought in advance to any close contact. The dog will be based in the Hub for this contact.

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

  Access to the dog will be carefully managed and supervised and children do not need to have close contact with it unless permission for this has been given. 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.

  Some children may have had upsetting or traumatic experiences and therefore be fearful of dogs (or indeed other animals). The dog will only come into close contact with pupils whose parents have given their permission. The dog will be a puppy and will grow up in the school environment surrounded by children. Experience and research have shown that, with proper guidance, handling and time, children can learn to overcome their fear of animals and gain a greater appreciation for them.

SCHOOL PET POLICY

APPENDIX 3

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Risk Assessment

Assessment conducted by: Miss Coffill	**Job title:** Deputy Headteacher	**Covered by this assessment:** All staff, students and visitors
Date of assessment: Summer Term 2025	**Review interval:** Annually	**Date of next review:** Summer Term 2026
Related documents: Health and Safety Policy		

Risk rating		**Likelihood of occurrence**		
		Probable	**Possible**	**Remote**
Likely impact	**Major** Causes major physical injury, harm or ill-health.	Low	Medium	Medium
	Severe Causes physical injury or illness requiring first aid.	Low	Medium	High
	Minor Causes physical or emotional discomfort.	Medium	High	High

Issue	Risk rating prior to action H/M/L	Recommended controls	In place? Yes/No	Recommended further actions to be taken to reduce risks	By whom	Deadline	Risk rating following action H/M/L
Health – diseases and parasites	M	● The dog has a designated handler who is in charge of feeding and caring for the dog while on school premises, ensuring there is a supply of fresh water available. ● The handler is responsible for permitting people to touch the dog. ● The dog is permitted only in outside areas, designated offices or other areas of school for certain events and always with a handler. The area is kept clean and secure for the wellbeing of the animal, pupils, staff and visitors. ● The dog is fully inoculated flea treated and worm treated regularly. ● The rabbits remain in the student hub in a clean hutch. They are	Y	● The dog and rabbits will go to the vet for regular check-up, to identify whether it has any transmittable diseases. ● On hot days, the handler will ensure there is appropriate provision in place to keep the dog cool, and ensure the dog avoids too much activity during the hottest part of the day.	LCo	Ongoing	L

		vaccinated annually and have regular treatment for fly strike.					
Hygiene	H	• The dog is suitably toilet trained. • The designated area for the dog to defecate is situated away from pupils and staff. • All faeces are immediately picked up by the handler, using a clinical waste bag, and disposed of into the clinical waste bin. • The handler immediately washes their hands with sufficient soap and water after picking up faeces. • Any soiled dog bedding is immediately disposed of in sealed clinical waste bags, and into the clinical waste bin. • The handler takes the dog's bedding home regularly to wash it. • Any pupils/staff/visitors who touch the dog and rabbits are advised to wash their hands	Y	• If the dog or rabbits are ill with an infection or disease, it will not be permitted in school until it has fully recovered. • Hand sanitiser will be available for anyone who touches the dog/rabbits	LCo	Ongoing	L

		afterwards, and sufficient hand washing provision is provided throughout the school. ● Anyone touching the dog, who has an exposed wound, must have the wound suitably covered.					
Bites and scratches	M	● The dog and rabbits have grown up in a family environment and as such, has been trained well, and is used to coming into close contact with people. It has also undergone puppy training course and will continue with a second training course ● Pupils/staff/visitors around the dog are closely supervised by the handler. ● Pupils/staff/visitors are advised not to put their face close to the dog. ● The dog is prohibited from roaming freely around the school without the supervision of the handler and will be on	Y	● Pupils/staff/visitors are only permitted to stroke the dog during allocated sessions. ● The dog is provided with a place it can go to get away from crowds, noise and activity. ● Students advised to remove blazer when holding the rabbit to prevent chewing of material.	LCo	Ongoing	L

		lead at all times when moving around the school. ● Rabbits have their claws trimmed regularly.					
Minor injuries related to dog housing and equipment	L	● All dog bedding/housing is regularly checked for defects. ● All dog equipment is stored away when not in use. ● The dog's food and water bowls are kept out of the path of people to avoid any trips. ● Any spillages from the dog's bowl are wiped up immediately. ● All rabbit food and water is inside the rabbit cage/hutch.	Y	● All dog bedding and resting crates are checked regularly for defects and replaced as required. ● All rabbit trays, food bowls and toys are checked regularly and replaced as required.	LCo	Ongoing	L
Allergies	M	● The dog breed is hypoallergenic and as such this will limit any allergic reactions to the dog dander. ● Pupils and staff known to have allergies to animals have restricted access to the dog and	Y	The dog and rabbits **<u>will not</u>** have close contact with anyone who has a severe dog allergy	LCo	Ongoing	L

		rabbits. ● All pupils and staff are advised not to touch their face after touching the dog or rabbits ● All pupils/staff/visitors are advised to wash their hands thoroughly after touching the dog or rabbits.					
Phobias	M	● Pupils and staff known to have a phobia of dogs are given restricted access to the dog. ● The dog is prohibited from roaming freely around the school without the supervision of the handler.	Y	● During busy times, such as breaks and time between lessons when lots of pupils and staff will be coming past the dog, the dog will be kept in the office area.	LCo	Ongoing	L