

# **Wellbeing Dog Policy and Risk Assessment for The Harbour at Spring Meadow**



## **SEMH Enhanced Provision**

Reviewed: Autumn Term 2024

Next Review: Autumn Term 2025

# Wellbeing Dog in School Policy and Risk Assessment

## Introduction

Children and adults can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills, through contact with a suitable, calm dog.

In addition to these benefits, children and adults take great enjoyment from interaction with animals.

## Is there a risk in bringing a dog into a school environment?

This policy shows that we have thought carefully about school life with a dog and how, through careful management, there is a very low risk of harm.

## Context

- Our dog is called Max.
- Max is owned by Mr Higgon-Williams and lives with him.
- Veterinary costs will be covered by Mr Higgon-Williams
- Max was chosen for the suitability of the general characteristics of his breed (cocker spaniel) –kind, gentle, intelligent, loyal, adaptable and friendly.
- Max has been in the care of Mr. H-W since puppyhood. Mr. H-W has been Max's primary caregiver and has played an integral role in his upbringing. Max has been exposed to a family environment, growing up around children from a young age. This early exposure has contributed to Max's gentle and sociable nature, making him well-suited to interact with children in an educational and therapeutic setting.
- The risk assessment will be reviewed annually.
- Visitors and new pupils will be informed of the dog on arrival.
- Public Liability Insurance will be covered by the school.

## Day-to-Day Management

### Max will:

- Come into The Harbour provision on agreed dates across the term.
- Not be allowed in school if he is unwell.
- Taken home if he doesn't settle or seems unhappy
- Be kept on a lead when arriving and leaving the provision grounds.
- Be under the full control and supervision of an adult at all times.
- Have access to a crate in The Harbour, allowing time away from the children, when he needs to sleep.

- Be fully trained in line with his age
- Have had all vaccinations.

**Our children will:**

- Not have sole responsibility for, or be left alone with, the dog.
- Meet the dog in a group of no more than three children, following 'approach, ask, pet, goodbye'.
- Be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog every time they meet him:
  - Always remain calm
  - Be gentle
  - Do not put your face near the dog's face
  - Do not disturb a dog that is eating or sleeping
  - Always approach the dog standing up.
  - Do not feed the dog

The pupils and adults will also learn about how dogs express their feelings through their body language. Growling or baring of teeth indicates that the dog feels threatened or angry. Flattened ears, tail lowered or between their legs, hiding behind their owner, whining or growling are signs that the dog is frightened or nervous. If Max is displaying any of these signs, he will immediately be removed from that particular situation or environment.

**Health and Safety Principles**

Children and adults will always wash their hands or use hand sanitiser after handling the dog.

Any dog excrement will be cleared up immediately and disposed of appropriately by the adult in charge of the dog at the time. Children must never be allowed to do this.

**Introduction and Consent:**

- Prior written consent from parents or guardians is required before any child is allowed to interact with our Wellbeing Dog.
- The introduction of our Wellbeing Dog will be gradual, with initial short and supervised sessions to assess individual reactions.

**Should a bite occur (even playfully):**

1. Parents and carers will be contacted immediately
2. The wound will be cleaned and covered with a sterile, non-sticky dressing
3. The child/adult will be released for medical attention
4. All staff will be informed
5. A full investigation will take place
6. The suitability of having a dog will be reassessed by the Head of provision and Head teacher.

**Review and Evaluation:**

- Regular reviews of the Wellbeing Dog's impact on the provision and the children's wellbeing will be conducted.
- Adjustments to the policy and procedures will be made based on feedback and assessments.

[RA Dog Wellbeing Intervention](#)