

Stanborough Primary School and Nursery

School Dog Risk Assessment



Includes:

Purpose and introduction

Interaction with pupils and staff

Pupils and staff interaction with the school dog

Hygiene/Health

Activities involving the school dog, including walking

Current Risk Assessment completed: September 2025

Risk Assessment to be reviewed: September 2026

School Dog Risk Assessment

Introduction:

The Stanborough Primary School Dog lives with our Head Teacher, Mrs Madden, and her family. She is a very caring and well-behaved dog who has the right temperament to become a real asset to our school community. Saffy, our school dog, is a miniature cockapoo.

She has public liability insurance; this means she can come into school. She regularly visits the vet for check-ups. Whilst she is there, they administer worm and flea treatments as well as make adjustments to her food intake to ensure she remains a healthy weight.

In addition to the 5 key reasons for our school dog joining us outlined in the purpose we also believe she will improve the children's abilities within the school and help to improve and secure higher attendance levels. The team at Stanborough Primary School have been considering obtaining a dog as a school therapy pet for some time and the decision was made in March 2021 to go ahead with the project.

The rationale behind this decision was as follows:

- For the school to have a pet that was able to live as naturally as conditions would allow.
- For the animal to be properly cared for outside of the school day.
- To have a pet that the children could interact with and be of benefit to the children's social and emotional development.

It is accepted that interacting with animals is not appropriate for all children but for some it has the potential to provide many positive benefits. Any parent who does not want their child to interact with 'Saffy' is invited to write to Mrs Madden and inform her of their wishes. There are no diseases associated with the dog as Biscot Mill Vets will be responsible for vaccinations, including rabies and completing regular health checks and necessary treatment. Saffy is also insured.

The risk assessment below is a working document and will be checked annually by key staff and the governing body.

Area: Interaction with pupils and staff

Reason: To ensure the school dog interacts appropriately at all times

Step 1 Identify the hazards	Step 2 Who might be harmed & how?	Step 3 What are you already doing?	Risk Rating Trivial / low / medium / high / stop	Step 4 Is anything further needed?
School dog biting a child or adult	Child or adult could be hurt if the school dog bites	The school dog is being trained not to bite. When the dog is approached in the correct way there is very limited danger. She lives with Mrs Madden who handles her all the time to ensure that she is used to interaction with children	Low	Ensure that children and adults do not interact with the school dog without supervision. Ensure that all interaction with the school dog is completed in the agreed way
Jumping up / scratching	If the school dog becomes excited there is a danger that she could jump up and knock a child over or leave a scratch mark	The dog's temperament and the agreed training program focus on discouraging jumping, with praise and rewards given when the behaviour is corrected. However, if Saffy does jump up, a simple command of 'down Saffy' will stop the behaviour. A letter will be sent to parents, asking them to sign and return a form if they do not want their child to have contact with the school dog. Parents are also asked to explain their preference to their child and instruct them not to approach the dog if they wish to avoid contact.	Medium	Ensure that children and adults do not interact with the school dog without supervision. The school dog will be enclosed in a cage when people come to interact with her or under lead control by an authorised adult
Running loose	If the school dog was to run loose she could hurt children/adults or damage property	The school dog will be contained at all times either in an office (with a clear sign on the door), in a cage or on a lead	Low	Monitor that the equipment used to contain the school dog is appropriate and effective

Step 1 Identify the hazards	Step 2 Who might be harmed & how?	Step 3 What are you already doing?	Risk Rating Trivial / low / medium / high / stop	Step 4 Is anything further needed?
Direct interaction with children/ staff	If the school dog is allowed to interact when not in the correct frame of mind children/ staff could be scratched	No interaction is allowed without authorisation. Interaction will be cancelled if the school dog shows signs of incorrect behaviour. Rewards/praise will be given to reinforce the desired behaviour	Medium	Ensure that the dog is approached in the agreed manner
Destruction of materials	If allowed the school dog may chew/destroy some school materials/resources	The school dog will be contained at all times. The school dog will have his own toys to play with and normal school resources will be removed	Low	Monitor that the equipment used to contain the school dog is appropriate and effective

Area: Pupils and staff interaction with the school dog

Reason: To ensure the school dog is effectively supported to interact appropriately at all times

Step 1 Identify the hazards	Step 2 Who might be harmed & how?	Step 3 What are you already doing?	Risk Rating Trivial / low / medium / high / stop	Step 4 Is anything further needed?
Incorrect / inconsistent interaction with dog	If a child/adult interacts with the school dog in the incorrect or inconsistent way this will affect the school dogs training and have a negative impact on future interaction	Agreed guidelines that must be followed at all times when interacting with the school dog. There cannot be any interaction with the school dog without authorisation	Medium	If there are any inconsistencies in approach with the school dog the adult/child will have the interaction stopped

Step 1 Identify the hazards	Step 2 Who might be harmed & how?	Step 3 What are you already doing?	Risk Rating Trivial / low / medium / high / stop	Step 4 Is anything further needed?
Use of rewards / treats	Children and adults could be harmed if the school dog is over excited when receiving a reward/treat. Children/adult must clean their hands after handling treats	Alcohol gel will be available to all adults (and children with written permission from parents). Treats will only be given to the school dog with authorisation	Low	Reminders to the children to wash hands / use alcohol gel after handling treats. Treats to be locked away to ensure they can only be used after authorisation
Pupil/staff knowledge of interaction with a puppy / dog	If adults and children have limited knowledge of how to interact correctly this could result in harm to the school dog or themselves	The Dog's Mentor Team or Senior Leadership Team will deliver an assembly annually 'Be Dog Smart' course with all of the children	Medium	There will be an agreed format for how to interact with the school

Area: Hygiene / Health

Reason: To ensure that pupils, staff and the school dog do not have an increased risk of illness as a result of the school dog being in school

Step 1 Identify the hazards	Step 2 Who might be harmed & how?	Step 3 What are you already doing?	Risk Rating Trivial / low / medium / high / stop	Step 4 Is anything further needed?
Worms / fleas	If the school dog is not treated for worms there is a danger that germs can be transferred to humans	The school dog will be treated monthly at a local vets to ensure she is correctly treated for worms and fleas	Low	Monitor that vet visits happen promptly and take actions suggested by the vet
Faeces	If a child/adult come into contact with the school dog's faeces some germs could be transferred	The school dog will only be walked under supervision. No child will be asked to pick up the dog's faeces, this will always be undertaken by the adult in supervision	Low	If a child finds faeces on the School field/playground they will report it to an adult
Step 1 Identify the hazards	Step 2 Who might be harmed & how?	Step 3 What are you already doing?	Risk Rating Trivial / low / medium / high / stop	Step 4 Is anything further needed?
Allergies	If a child is allergic to dogs they could become unwell	Children will not be in contact with the school dog if we have received a negative response form from parents/guardians. If a child has an allergy the school dog will not carry out tasks near the child	Medium	
Children's access to school dog's resource	If a child has access to the school dog's treats/food and eats some they could become unwell	All of the school dog's resources will be locked away. No child will be allowed to enter the school dog's area without authorisation	Low	Remind children not to enter area
Contact with food preparation areas	If the school dog enters a food preparation	The school dog will be in a contained area or on a lead at all times around school.	Trivial	

	area this could be unhygienic	She will never enter the school kitchen		
Cleaning hands after interacting with the school dog	If hands are not cleaned children/adults could become unwell	All adults and children will clean their hands after interaction with the school dog	Low	Remind children and adults to clean their hands

Area: Activities involving the school dog, including walking

Reason: To ensure that the school dog has a meaningful and safe impact on the school community

Step 1 Identify the hazards	Step 2 Who might be harmed & how?	Step 3 What are you already doing?	Risk Rating Trivial / low / medium / high / stop	Step 4 Is anything further needed?
Walking the dog on and off the site	Children could be harmed during a walk offsite if they are not focussed. Children might be harmed if they do not interact correctly when the school dog is on a walk	If the school dog is taken off site normal risk assessed procedure will take place. No children will take the lead when the school dog goes for a walk unless authorised to do so by accompanying adult. No children will be allowed to interact with the school dog when he is on a walk unless permission is given	Medium	Careful consideration needs to be given to the amount of time the school dog is allowed to walk around school during play/lunchtimes
Step 1 Identify the hazards	Step 2 Who might be harmed & how?	Step 3 What are you already doing?	Risk Rating Trivial / low / medium / high / stop	Step 4 Is anything further needed?
Visits to classroom	If the school dog visits a class and the children do not follow the correct procedure she may become over excited	The school dog will visit classrooms either with a member of the school office, class teacher or Mrs Madden. The children in classrooms will follow the agreed procedure or interaction will stop	Medium	Careful consideration will be given to when the school dog can visit classrooms and be under the control of the class teacher or teaching assistant
Being fed	If a child tries to interact when the school dog is eating she may respond aggressively	No child will be allowed in the school dog's contained area when she is eating. Children may prepare the food for the school dog (washing their hands afterwards). All feeding will be supervised	Low	Reminders to the children feeding the school dog to not interact when he is eating

School events	If the school dog is overwhelmed he may become aggressive or boisterous	The school dog will only attend school events if they are appropriate and she will be under the control of a supervising adult	Low	Monitor the school dog's reaction to school events. If the school events are too overwhelming the school dog might not attend school on that day
Other dogs (on and off the site)	If the school dog is overwhelmed she may become aggressive or boisterous	No other dogs will be allowed on the school premises If another dog is seen whilst on a walk this will be dealt with by the supervising adult at all times	Low	Monitor the school dog's reaction when out walking