



The Kassia Academy

Part of **KINGS ACADEMY TRUST**

Therapy Dog in School Policy

The Kassia Academy

Last reviewed on: May 2023

Next review due by: May 2024

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Policy Statement

The Kassia Academy is committed to the safety of its pupils, employees and visitors. This policy has been implemented to ensure that the welfare of these stakeholders, as well as the dog, are prioritised at all times.

The Kassia Academy does not allow dogs on the school site unless specifically authorised by the Head teacher or if they are assistance dogs.

This policy outlines the measures put in place to allow the school to authorise a therapy/reading dog on the school site.

Rationale

The value of animal therapy is known to have multiple benefits to pupil wellbeing and mental health. Existing UK schools with a therapy dog report:

- Increased pupil attendance by up to 16% (Knockhill Primary Academy)
- Decreased anxiety and improved social interactions in pupils (Kingshill School)
- Benefits to the development of communication and emotional skills of pupils (Bristnall Hall Academy)
- Increased understanding of responsibility and development in empathy in pupils (Sancton Wood School)

The additional value of having a therapy dog to support with reading in school is widely reported by UK charities as:

- Benefitting pupils who are reluctant to read, unconfident readers and those with additional needs (Therapy Dogs Nationwide)
- Improving reading skills, encouraging positive behaviour and building self-confidence and self-esteem (Bark and Reading)
- Reducing stress and nerves when reading out loud to a group and creating a calming environment to develop confidence (Pets as Therapy)

All of these benefits will be of huge value to our pupils given that:

- The proportion of pupils with additional needs at Norham High School is well over twice the national average (30% compared to 12.1% national average).
- Reading is a key priority for the school, particularly targeting reluctant readers
- The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on reading ages in KS3
- The average reading age of a Year 8 pupil is currently 10 years 9 months (chronological age of 12+)
- The average reading age of a Year 7 pupil is currently 10 years (chronological age of 11+)

Information

When identifying a therapy/reading dog to work in school, the following information must apply:

- The dog must have a named owner who is an employee at the school
- The owner must take full responsibility for the care of the dog and keep the dog up to date with their vaccinations, worm and flea treatments and any other treatment they may require to maintain good health
- Consideration must be made to the breed and nature of the dog
- The breeder must be reputable and provide evidence of full health checks of both parents of the dog

- The dog should be hypoallergenic to reduce the risk of allergy
- The dog must undergo training at a reputable training company
- The dog must have a base in school where they will remain when not working
- The dog must be at least 6 months of age to work directly with pupils on therapeutic and reading intervention

Communication, Introduction and Integration of the Dog

The school must ensure that prior to the placement of a dog that all stakeholders have been informed. The following steps are in place:

- All staff will be communicated with via the weekly staff bulletin and the offer of a drop in session. All staff will be given the option to opt of involvement with a therapy dog if they have any concerns regarding health and safety, allergies or fears of animals.
- Letters will be sent to all parents/carers informing them of the school's decision to have a therapy dog on site. All parents/carers will be given the option to opt out of their child having involvement with the therapy dog.
- All pupils will be informed through form class. An assembly will be delivered to every year group to introduce a dog and inform pupils of key messages regarding health and safety. All pupils will also have the option to opt of involvement with a therapy dog.
- The dog will attend school open evenings and events to introduce them to new parents/carers and pupils.
- All visitors will be informed that there is a therapy dog on site via a notice in the school reception and notice on the school website.

The dog will then be introduced to the school site on a gradual basis over time in order to protect the welfare of the dog and all stakeholders. The dog will not work directly with pupils until they are fully trained, integrated and used to all aspects of school life i.e. school bells, fire alarms, transitions between classes and familiarity with staff.

Curriculum

The curriculum will support learning about dogs and how best to behave around our dog.

A dog will support pupils with:

- **Reading** – pupils will read to the dog
- **Responsibility** – pupils will take part in daily responsibilities of looking after a dog such as walking, brushing, feeding and watering.
- **Welfare** – pupils will be offered time with the dog for therapy
- **Rewards** – the dog will be involved with rewarding pupils for those who would like to be involved

A dog will follow a structured timetable, ensuring that its work has meaning and sessions will be pre-planned and linked to the school's curriculum.

Complaints and Allegations

The Kassia Academy has completed a thorough risk assessment to allow for the presence of dogs on the school site. This will be reviewed and updated annually unless required sooner. If anyone reports any issues regarding the dog, they will be asked to raise their concerns in writing which will be responded to in line with our complaints procedure.

Should the dog hurt anyone:

- Parents/carers will be informed immediately (if pupil)
- First aid procedure will be fully implemented
- Pupil or staff members will be released for medical attention if required
- A full investigation of circumstances will be conducted. A dog will not be permitted onto the school site until the investigation is completed.
- The suitability of a dog will be re-assessed following investigation.

Should the dog get hurt by someone:

- The owner will be informed immediately
- The owner will visit the registered vet if deemed necessary
- A full investigation of circumstances will be undertaken
- The access of the person responsible for injuring the dog will be re-assessed following investigation.

A dog in school will be covered by the school's public liability insurance for injury to the dog through negligence of a member of staff or the fabric of the building. Additional insurance is required to cover the owner for third party public liability in the event that the dog injures a member of staff, pupil or visitor.

Contingency Plans

If the dog escapes from the school building and is loose on the school grounds:

- The owner will be informed immediately
- The owner and other identified handlers/members of staff will be asked to secure exits to prevent the dog from leaving the grounds
- Pupils will be informed not to approach or chase the dog
- The owner will secure the dog with a lead using training commands

If the dog escapes from the school site:

- The owner will be informed immediately
- The owner and other identified handlers/members of staff will be asked to search the surrounding area
- Pupils will be informed not to approach or chase the dog
- If found, the owner will secure the dog with a lead using training commands
- If not found, the missing dog will be reported to the correct outside agencies

In case of an emergency evacuation/fire drill:

- The appropriate adult will walk the dog on a lead to the assembly point
- The dog will be passed to the owner
- The dog will remain with the owner until the building is deemed safe and all pupils have re-entered classrooms.

- If the owner is not on site when there is an evacuation, then another member of staff will be delegated responsible for the ownership of the dog during this time

In the case of severe weather:

- The dog will only be walked during cooler period of the day in hot weather to prevent overheating and burns to paws
- A fan will be provided to keep the dog cool during hot weather if required
- The dog will only be walked if the ground is deemed appropriate during snow/ice periods (clear of both) to prevent frostbite
- The dog will be kept in a room which is warm during cold weather periods

Health and Safety

To ensure the safety and welfare of our pupils, staff, visitors and a therapy dog, a full risk assessment is in place (Appendix 1). The following outlined steps will be taken to protect all on the school site.

Pupils, Staff and Visitors

- The dog will be supervised at all times when moving around the school building and will be kept on a lead when on a walk.
- The dog will be under the full control and supervision of an adult at all times when on the school site.
- Pupils will never be left alone with the dog.
- Pupils and staff will be informed on how to act around the dog prior to its integration. New staff and pupils will receive this advice prior to joining the school.
- The number of pupils having access at one time will be monitored and limited to a reasonable amount.
- Adults will immediately remove the dog from the situation if it shows any signs of distress (growling, bearing teeth, tail lowered between legs).
- The dog will be kept away from any area within the school where food is being prepared or consumed i.e. kitchen, dining hall, technology department).
- Anyone who has access to the dog must wash his or her hands before and after interaction.
- The dog will be discouraged from jumping, scratching and licking.
- Pupils will only access the dog when they are scheduled to meet or work with the dog.
- The dog will not be linked with any pupil whose parents/carers withdraw consent or where there is a high risk of the pupil injuring the dog or putting himself or herself in danger with the dog.
- Sensible precautions will be put in place to minimise the risk of the spread of infectious disease.
- The dog will not enter the school site unless free from parasites.

The Dog

- Pupils will be informed not to disturb the dog whilst sleeping or eating. The dog will have a designated place where it can rest and eat.
- The dog will work for three hours' maximum per day and be given sufficient time between sessions to rest, eat and toilet. Only the dog's handler will have access to the dog during this time.
- The dog will be exercised on school field when appropriate.
- The dog will be given time to adjust to the school environment (i.e. fire alarm, bells etc.) prior to being introduced to pupils.
- The dog will never be left in the building unsupervised or overnight.
- The dog will be cared for outside of school when unable to attend school i.e. due to illness etc.
- The dog will only be handled by confident staff who are familiar to the dog and able to control them.

- The dog will have access to fresh drinking water at all times.
- The dog will be given the opportunity to toilet whenever required.
- The dog's owner will ensure that the dog is not put into any potential situations that would compromise the dog's health and wellbeing.
- The dog's claws will be trimmed to reduce risk of accidental scratching.
- The dog is microchipped and registered to the owner.
- Pet insurance is in place to ensure that the dog is covered for any injury.

Appendix 1 - Risk Assessment

Risk Assessment completed by Lindsay Regan

Date completed: September 2022

Review date: September 2024

Impact		Probability	
Descriptor	Indicator	Descriptor	Indicator
5 (major)	Major impact if realised	5 (very likely)	Risk will emerge
4 (significant)	Significant impact if realised	4 (likely)	Risk should emerge
3 (moderate)	Moderate impact if realised	3 (unlikely)	Risk could emerge
2 (minor)	Minor impact if realised	2 (very unlikely)	Risk unlikely to emerge
1 (no significance)	No consequence if realised	1 (impossible)	Risk will not emerge

Score	Risk description	Action required
25	Extreme risk	Immediate escalation to Headteacher
20-15	High risk	Actively manage risks and review regularly
12 – 6	Medium risk	Take appropriate action to minimise risks
5 and below	Low risk	Regular review and removal from RA if appropriate

Risk	Impact of risk 1-5	Probability of risk 1-5	Risk rating (I x P)	Control Measures
Pupil, staff or visitor is knocked to the ground by the dog	3	2	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The dog will always be in the care of an appropriate adult handler and will never be allowed to freely roam the school site. The dog will be supervised when escorted around site and in the learning environment. The dog will undertake specific training to not jump or mouth anyone. Pupils have been and will continue to be taught the impact of their actions. Education of this nature is continually given to students and staff during assemblies and form time. Pupils and staff will be taught what to do to stop the dog from chasing them e.g. fold arms and stand still. The dog will undergo formal training with an experienced trainer. The owner and handlers will continue to reinforce positive training strategies in a controlled area. The dog will also undergo conditioning to the school environment prior to its work with pupils. Pupils and staff will be taught not to tease the dog or get it to jump up. Owner will undertake Kennel Club training with the dog prior to its introduction to school to ensure that it is well trained and handled well.

Pupil, staff or visitor is scratched by the dog	3	3	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dog will always be in the care of an appropriate adult and will never be allowed to freely roam the school site. • The dog will be supervised when escorted around site and in the learning environment. • The dog will undertake specific training to not jump or mouth anyone • Pupils have been and will continued to be taught the impact of their actions. Education of this nature is continually given to students and staff during assemblies and form time. • Pupils and staff will be taught what to do to stop the dog from chasing them e.g. fold arms and stand still. • The dog will undergo formal training with an experienced trainer. The owner and handlers will continue to reinforce positive training strategies in a controlled area. • The dog will also undergo conditioning to the school environment prior to its work with pupils. • Pupils and staff will be taught not to tease the dog or get it to jump up.
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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dog's owner will undertake Kennel Club training with the dog prior to its introduction to school to ensure that it is well trained and handled well.
Pupil, staff or visitor is bitten by the dog	4	3	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dog will always be in the care of an appropriate adult and will never be allowed to freely roam the school site. • The dog will be supervised around site and in the learning environment. • The dog will undertake specific training to not jump or mouth anyone • Pupils have been and will continue to be taught the impact of their actions. Education of this nature is continually given to students and staff during assemblies and form time. • Pupils and staff will be taught what to do to stop the dog from chasing them e.g. fold arms and stand still. • The dog will undergo formal training with an experienced trainer. The owner and handlers will continue to reinforce positive training strategies in a controlled area. • The dog will also undergo conditioning to the school environment prior to its work with pupils. • Pupils and staff will be taught not to tease the dog or get it to jump up. • Owner will undertake Kennel Club training with the dog prior to its introduction to school to ensure that it is well trained and handled well.
Dog gets injured on site by person	3	2	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dog will have full pet insurance (provided by its owner) to cover veterinary bills due to injury. • The dog will always be in the care of an appropriate adult and will not be allowed to roam the school site unsupervised. • The dog will never be left unsupervised with a pupil/s.
Dog gets injured/sick due to injecting objects on the school site	2	3	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dog will always be in the care of an appropriate adult and will never be allowed to freely roam the school site. • The dog will not be allowed in areas of the school where food is prepared including: breakfast club, kitchen, lunch hall and technology. • Staff, pupils and visitors will be made aware not to feed the dog, unless it is with the agreed food within the dog's diet.
Dog escapes the school site	2	4	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dog will always be in the care of an appropriate adult and will never be allowed to freely roam the school site. • The dog will have pet insurance to cover injury obtained off site. • The dog will be microchipped and registered to its owner. • A contingency plan is in place for if the dog escapes the school site.
Pupil, staff or visitor has an allergic reaction to the dog.	3	2	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The selected breed should be a hypoallergenic dog and so the probability of an allergic reaction is low. • Parents/carers and staff will be asked to inform the school of any known allergies prior to introduction of the dog to the school. • A list of all pupils and staff who should not interact with the dog will be kept on the school system and be held by the handlers and owner. • Pupils and staff have been taught to wash their hands after active participation with the dog. • The school site is cleaned daily. • Visitors will be informed of the dog when entering site via notice in the school reception and will be asked to inform reception of any allergies. This information will then be passed to the owner to ensure the dog does not have contact with the visitor.
Pupil, staff or visitor contracts germs from the dog.	3	2	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should the dog defecate on the school site, this will be cleaned up by the dog handler immediately and dispose of it in a safe manner. • All defecation will be disposed of in an outdoor bin away from pupils. • All immunisations/vaccinations will be kept up to date as per the vet guidelines. • Flea and worm treatment will be carried out in six weekly intervals. • If the dog is unwell, he will not be permitted on site until he has been seen by a vet and deemed fit and healthy. • The good health of the dog is the responsibility of its owner at all times.
School unable to afford ongoing cost of dogs day to day upkeep or	1	1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dog is the responsibility of its owner who is financially responsible for the health and care needs of the dog. • The dog remains the responsibility of its owner outside of school hours. • The school has public liability insurance, which will cover the school for injury to the dog because of the fabric of the building or negligence from a member of staff. • The owner has third party public liability insurance which covers any legal

medical bills				Fees and compensation resulting from injury caused by the dog to staff, pupils or visitors when on the school site.
School not adequately covered financially	1	1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has public liability insurance, which will cover the school for injury to the dog because of the fabric of the building or negligence from a member of staff. • The owner has third party public liability insurance, which covers any legal fees and compensation resulting from injury caused by the dog to staff, pupils or visitors when on the school site.

Appendix 2 – Named Dog Information, Responsibilities and Integration Plan

This appendix relates to the introduction of a named dog. A further appendix will be added for any further introduction of any additional dogs.

General Information

The dog's owner is identified as: Mrs Lindsay Regan

The dog breed/information: The dog is a male Cockapoo born on 01/05/2018, named Henry. He has been bred by a reputable breeder. Both parents (female working type Cocker Spaniel and male Miniature Poodle) are KC registered and are cleared for all health tests. Both parent dogs are full pedigree making Henry an F1 Cockapoo.

The breed: Cockapoo's are hypoallergenic dogs, which means that they are unlikely to cause an allergic reaction. They are intelligent and social dogs with a friendly temperament making them appropriate for use as therapy dogs.

The dogs training: The dog is undergoing full puppy training with a reputable company 'Lymm Pets Animal hotel' registered with the Kennel club. This company is owned and led by the dog's breeder. In addition, the dog will undertake the full programme of Kennel Club training (alongside its owner) to achieve Bronze Award status prior to its integration. The dog will not work directly with pupils until he is fully trained.

The dog will be situated: Reception circulation area and will access classrooms and social areas of the school for therapy as well as the schoolyard and the school field for exercise. The dog lives at the address of Lindsay Regan outside of school hours.

The dog's care: Lindsay Regan is responsible for the care of the dog at all times, including veterinary care. It is the responsibility of Lindsay Regan to ensure that the dog is in good health. If the dog is not in good health, then under no circumstances will he access the school site until he has been cleared as well by his vet.

Lindsay Regan is responsible for ensuring that all vaccinations, worm and flea treatments are fully up to date prior to the dog entering the school site.

Responsibilities

School Name:	The Kassia Academy and Support Services
The Owner:	Lindsay Regan
The Handlers:	Agreed staff on the school site
In case that the owner is not on the school site at the time of an emergency evacuation, the dog will be cared for by:	Karl Hanna
The dog's base will be:	Reception circulation area
The school will be responsible for:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensuring that the 'Dog in School' policy is adhered to by staff, pupils and visitors to the school site.• Ensuring that the dog has an appropriate rest area, feeding area and toilet area away from busy areas.• Ensuring that adequate insurance is in place for the dog to be in the school.• Ensuring that only appropriate adults supervise the dog whilst on the school site.
The owner will be responsible for:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensuring that the dog is on site every day during term unless the dog is unwell.• Ensuring that the dog is regularly groomed and checked for signs of infection or other illness.• If the dog is unwell, that he will be diagnosed and treated by a registered vet• Ensuring that the dog will receive relevant vaccinations and that a record of dates of vaccinations

Are held on the school site.

- Ensuring that the dog receives adequate worm and flea treatments.
- Ensuring that the dog's claws are trimmed to reduce risk of accidental scratching.
- Ensuring that the dog is cared for outside of the school to a high standard.
- Ensuring that the dog's rest and food area within the school is kept clean and in line with health and safety standards.
- Ensuring that adequate insurance is in place for the dog's health and care needs when on and off the school site.
- Ensuring that the dog is fully trained prior to working with pupils and other staff.

The handlers (other identified staff) will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that they can handle the dog safely prior to working with pupils.
- Ensuring that the dog is care for whilst being handled by others.
- To be available in case of emergency i.e. dog escaping.

Integration Plan

The dates and periods below are subject to change depending upon the training and needs of the dog.

Planned date	Activity	Review
01/08/2018	The dog will move into the home of its owner. He will continue his training with his breeder during this time.	
07/08/2018	The dog will receive its second (final) vaccinations and be allowed outdoors.	
09/2018	The dog will make short visits to the school site to become familiar with the environment.	
Following the above	Once the dog is familiar and feels safe and secure in the environment, he will begin to visit the school site during the day for short periods (1 hour initially, then 2 hours, 3 hours etc.) building up to full days. The dog will not interact with pupils during this time.	
After 16/11/2018 (public liability insurance starts when the dog is 6 months old)	The dog will start interactions with small groups of pupils for short bursts of time (30-minute sessions maximum). These will be gradually increased over time in order to socialise the dog within the school environment.	
Following the above and by March 2019	The dog will be timetabled to work with pupils for full sessions (therapy and reading) and extra-curricular activities and this policy will be fully implemented.	

Appendix 3 – FAQ's

Is the dog from a reputable breeder?

Yes. 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?

The dog will be kept in the reception area. The reception area is separate from the classrooms and playground area to ensure it only meets pupils who are happy to have contact and have parental permission for this, under strict supervision. The dog will also have a space to spend time in classrooms and other areas within the school grounds where pupils can interact safely.

Has a risk assessment been undertaken?

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

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 walked regularly and given free time outside. Parents/carers will be able to give permission in advance to allow their child to be able to walk with a member of staff and the dog during that time. The dog will be kept in the reception area, will only have planned, and supervised contact with pupils and visitors.

The dog will be carefully trained over a period and will have unlimited access to food and water. We will work carefully to ensure the dog's welfare is always considered.

How will this be managed where staff, pupils or visitors have allergies?

The breed of dog has been considered to reduce risk of allergy. The Cockapoo breed are hypoallergenic dogs

People do not need to touch a dog, which will relieve the possibility of allergic reactions. We already manage a number of allergies at school and this will be no different for pupils and adults that are allergic to dogs.

Individual needs will always be met and we are happy to work with all to put additional control measures in place for individual allergies.

The dog will be given a high quality food and regularly groomed to reduce any possibility of allergens and the school site will be cleaned daily.

A list of all known staff and pupils with allergies will be held on our school system.

Someone is frightened of dogs; how will you manage this?

Access to the dog will be carefully managed and supervised and staff, pupils and visitors do not need to have close contact with it unless permission for this has been given. We hope to work closely with all who are fearful of dogs to alleviate their fear and to teach them how to manage this.