

Ysgol Maes Hyfryd

Therapy Dog Policy

Introduction

Children 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 take great enjoyment from interaction with animals. By having a Therapy Dog we want to encourage those children who are vulnerable, or those less confident at reading to have a friendly audience and look forward to reading as a treat. Also it will give students who needs some mindfulness or relax therapy to have allocated 'dog time'.

Dogs

Pippy, the black miniature Cockerpoo, is a therapy dog in training and owned by Helen Humphreys, a registered Person-Centred Counsellor and Play Therapist for Flintshire County Council. Pippy has had pet therapy clearance from a local veterinarian stating she is a calm dog and does not react to loud noises, physical contact and does not become aggressive.

During a young person's therapy session, Pippy provides at times a welcome distraction, especially as one to one therapy can be overwhelming and a daunting experience. Young people are noticeably calmer when stroking Pippy and their attention is prolonged with strong bonds and trusting relationships forming easily. Pippy offers unconditional love, trust and empathy, which is greatly received by the young people and staff alike. Through this, confidence can be built upon as the young people teach Pippy a trick or give a simple command.

If a Young Person does not wish to work with Pippy she is trained to lie down under the table and does not move until given a command to do so and for those with a fear of dogs she is removed from the room prior to a session starting.

Shadow – German Shepherd owned by Jo Taylor (works with groups of pupils in the hall)

Management day-to-day

Dogs will:

- Not be allowed in school if they are unwell
- Be kept on a lead when moving between classrooms or on a walk
- Be under the full control and supervision of an adult at all times in designated areas

Pupils will:

- NOT have sole responsibility for, or be left alone with dogs
- Be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around dog every time they meet the dogs
 - Always remain calm
 - Be gentle
 - Do not put faces near the dogs
 - Do not disturb a dog that is eating or sleeping
 - Do not feed the dog

Health and Safety Principles

Children will always wash their hands or use alcohol gel after handling the dog. Any dog foul will be cleared up immediately and disposed of appropriately by the adult in charge of the dogs at the time. Children must never be allowed to do this.

Should a bite occur (even playfully):

1. Parents 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 Headteacher.

Hazard & risk	Who could be harmed?	What precautions are in place?
Animal Health, diseases and parasites	Pupils/Staff/Visitors	Dog to be vaccinated as required before coming into school
Dog excrement & urine - illness and falls/slips	Pupils/Staff/Visitors	Dog will be wormed and kept free of fleas, ticks. Any excrement or urine will be cleaned up immediately and thoroughly disposed of responsibly and hygienically by the owner or adult with responsibility at the time of the incident. Hand washing facilities close to where the dog will be. A bag containing poo bags/plastic bags, kitchen roll and rubber gloves will be carried by the owner of the dog.
Hygiene/Infection	Pupils/Staff/Visitors	Adequate provision for hand washing. Do not allow children to touch any part of their face with their hands before hands are washed/anitbac. All wounds on exposed skin are suitably. Food stuff stored carefully to prevent contamination and infestation.
Allergic reaction to dog	Pupils/Staff/Visitors	Parents to be informed that a dog is on site to let the school know if their child is allergic to dogs / afraid of dogs. In this event assurance that the child does not come into contact with the dog.
Bites, cuts and scratches	Pupils/Staff/Visitors	There will be no unsupervised contact with pupils. Dog closely supervised and kept under control in the hall / parents room. Pupils and staff will be made aware of the procedures of meeting and handling the dog. Supervising adult to ensure dog not over petted to avoid any incidents. If dog appears anxious or over-stimulated, to be removed to peaceful surroundings
Fire drill & evacuation of dog		Walk out with owner onto the school playground away from the pupils.