



Baines School

Nil Sine Labore

School Wellbeing Dog Policy

2022 / 23

Baines School

Reviewed: 7th November 2022

Approved by Governors:

To be reviewed: November 2024

Introduction

Our school wellbeing dog is Rufus. Rufus lives with Mr Spence (Pastoral Officer). He is a very calm and well behaved dog who has the right temperament to become a real asset to our school. Baines has a public liability insurance policy, meaning that Rufus can come into school. Rufus will regularly visit the vet for check ups and he has taken part in a School Wellbeing Dog Programme, which teaches him basic obedience skills. In addition to the 5 key benefits for a school Wellbeing dog to join us is clearly outlined below. We also believe that Rufus will improve the children's abilities within the school and help to improve and secure higher attendance levels.

While in school Rufus will work to a clear timetable, ensuring a programme of work which incorporates sufficient 'down time' for him. Rufus has a dedicated quiet space in the school, away from students, for rest and relaxation. The dog is accompanied at all times by a handler who is responsible for all interactions with students and the dog's wellbeing whilst in school. Outside the school environment, the dog lives with their owner. He will take responsibility for the dog's welfare and ensure that the school dog has a happy and fulfilled home life. **Purpose**

- Dogs teach children responsibility. Having to remember to feed, provide water and show support for a dog can give children a sense of importance and satisfaction that they can't get from school or other chores. The relationship that develops can be life-changing for a child and a great support system as they themselves continue to grow and develop.
- Dogs can teach children patience. Dogs do not always do as they are told first time.
- Dogs can teach children compassion. Just like humans, dogs feel emotion and pain. They are prone to injuries and the infirmities of age during their relatively short lives.
- Dogs can teach children about socialisation. Like most of us, dogs are social animals that enjoy and need attention and affection. By learning how to interact with a dog, children can learn how to better socialise with other children. If they can learn the social cues of a dog, then interacting with humans who can talk will be a walk in the park!
- Dogs are fun. Last, but certainly not least, dogs are a lot of fun. They greet you with a wagging tail every day and can cheer you up even on your worst day. Many people have studied dogs in attempts to decipher their behaviour, and the theories abound. However, you just have to witness the interactions between dogs and children to realise the potential for greatness. Dogs can sense when children with epilepsy are about to have a seizure, they can sense when a diabetic child's sugar is low, and they can help children with severe physical disabilities find happiness in life. With the proper training and supervision, a dog can enrich a child's life. After all, dogs are basically four-legged children who never grow up!

Rationale

There is an increasing body of research regarding the benefits to a school of having a wellbeing dog. Children can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills through contact with a dog. In addition to these benefits, children

take great enjoyment from interaction with a dog. By having a dog in school we want to encourage those children specifically who are vulnerable, or those who are less confident with learning to have a friendly audience and to look forward to a challenge. Having a dog in school can encourage reluctant children to come to school. The vast majority of dogs are gentle and loving, offering children opportunities to improve social development skills, unconditional acceptance and the chance to do something really well. For some children, a dog will be a special friend, helping them to build self-esteem, relax and have fun. For others, time spent with a dog will be a reward for excellent effort with a difficult challenge.

Detailed areas where our school dog can be engaged to help our students

1. Improving concentration, attention and listening
2. Play, participation and social interaction
3. Speech and other communication
4. Reducing anxiety
5. Personal care activities e.g. grooming; personal hygiene etc.
6. Sensory skills development
7. Motor skills development
8. Cognitive skills development
9. Confidence and self esteem
10. Responsibility and respect for others
11. Developing independence
12. Motivation to attend school or engage in specific learning/activities
13. Specific life skills e.g. road safety
14. Improving the effectiveness of Wellbeing sessions

Dog Briefs

Insurance

Our school dog is fully insured, under their owner's personal dog insurance packages and school's insurance. Each package ensures coverage of £5,000,000 cover, per claim for third party public liability insurance.

Cliverton insurance offers specific insurance for taking dogs into school and the school has undertaken this policy. The coverage equates to an annual cost of £166.20 which is met by the school.

Owners

Matthew Spence (Pastoral Officer) is the legal owner of Rufus. Rufus lives with Mr Spence.

Training

Rufus began his training with Natasha-Anne Davies who founded KRRs Training. Natasha is qualified as a Canine Behaviourist and is an ADTB Approved Instructor. Bronze level puppy training began on 31st July 2019 and Rufus passed his Bronze level assessment on 25th September, meaning Rufus is ready to begin working in our school.

Rufus will continue his behaviour and obedience training with KRRs in school. If at any time Natasha, Mr Spence, Mrs Chapman or any other adult has a concern over Rufus' suitability as a school dog, his attendance at school will cease whilst the concern is addressed.

All training provided by KRRs Training is approved by the School Wellbeing Dog Association.

Safety

It is proposed that Rufus will be on school premises from October half term 2019. Initially, he will undergo a phased introduction to the school, which will enable him to become accustomed to the sounds and smells and the general daily school environment. Once the phased introduction is complete, he will be

introduced to our students. During this time, he will be closely monitored by Mr Spence and other designated staff members, and he will be on a lead at all times.

All students in the school will receive an introductory assembly on health and safety and how to work with Rufus.

Vaccinations/Fleas/Worms

Rufus is registered with Norcross Vets. He receives regular worm and flea treatment, along with his vaccinations and boosters. He also has two health checks a year to ensure he is fit and healthy at all times.

If Rufus is unwell, he will not attend school until the vet advises he is well enough to return to school.

Allergies

Rufus is a Shichon breed, which is a Bichon Frise/Shih Tzu cross. He is a hypo allergenic dog breed. However, we cannot guarantee that students will not have any allergies to him, therefore we encourage parents to inform us of any likely allergies that students may suffer.

Parents / Carers

A letter informing parents /carers of the school wellbeing dog will be distributed at the start of October 2019. Parents/carers have been asked to inform the school if they have any concerns regarding their child and the school wellbeing dog. Any concerns will be shared with staff. All students working with the school dog will need written consent from their parent/carers and this will be ascertained by the school.

Other dogs coming onto the school premises

A letter has been sent out to the parents explaining that the school will remain a dog exclusion zone and that the school dog will have had specialist training which is why he is able to come onto the premises. An opportunity has been presented to parents to come and raise any concerns.

School Wellbeing Dog Risk Assessment

Updated September 2022

The following risk assessment applies to our wellbeing dog. The owner of Rufus is Mr Matthew Spence.

Areas of Concern: Interaction with students and staff				
Reason for concern: To ensure the school dog interacts appropriately at all times				
Step 1 Identify the hazards	Step 2 Who might be harmed and how?	Step 3 What are you already doing?	Risk rating Trivial/Low/Medium/High/Stop	Step 4 Is there anything further needed?
School dog biting a child	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. The dog has experience with children with emotional and behavioural problems, and is comfortable around children/teenagers.	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 an agreed way.

Jumping up / scratching	If the school dog becomes excited there is a danger that he could jump up and knock over a child over or leave a scratch mark.	The agreed training programme involves not jumping up with praise/rewards being given when successful. A letter was sent home asking parents to sign and return the form if they were unwilling for their child to have contact with the school dog. Parents have been asked to explain their wishes to their child and ask them not to approach the dog if they do not want any contact.	Medium	Ensure that children and adults do not interact with the school dog without supervision. The school dog will be enclosed in a pen when people come to interact with him/her or under lead control by an authorised adult.
Running loose	If the school dog was to run loose, he 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 restricted pen area or on a lead.	Low	Monitor that the equipment used to contain the school dog is appropriate and effective.
Direct interaction with children and/or staff	If the school dog is allowed to interact when not in the correct frame of mind, children and/or 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 or destroy some school materials and/or resources	The school dog will be contained at all times. The school dog will have his own toys to play.	Low	Monitor the equipment used to contain the school dog is appropriate and effective.
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Area of Concern: Students and staff interaction with the school dog				
Reason for concern: 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 and how?	Step 3 What are you already doing?	Risk rating Trivial/Low/Medium/High/Stop	Step 4 Is there 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.
Use of rewards/treats	Children and adults could be harmed if the school dog is over-excited when receiving a reward/treat. Children and adults must clean their hands after handling treats.	Alcohol gel will be available to all adults and children. All adults and/or children will be told to wash their hands after interaction with the school dogs. Treats will only be given to the school dog with authorisation.	Low	Reminders to the children to wash hands after handling treats. Treats to be locked away to ensure they can only be used after authorisation.

Students and staff knowledge of interaction with the school dog	If adults and children have limited knowledge of how to interact correctly this could result in harm to the school dog or themselves	All children will have access to the Kennel Club 'Safe and Sound' resources to continue promoting DogSmart behaviours	Low	Monitor that the equipment used to contain the school dog is appropriate and effective
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Area of Concern: Hygiene / Health / Covid 19

Reason for concern: To ensure that students, 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 and how?	Step 3 What are you already doing?	Risk rating Trivial/Low/Medium/High/Stop	Step 4 Is there 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 regularly treated to ensure he is effectively protected against worms and fleas	Low	Monitor the regularity and application of treatments
Faeces	If a child or adult comes into contact with the school	The school dog will be walked daily before he arrives in school by his owner.	Low	If a child find faeces on the school field/playground they will report it to an adult.

	dog's faeces, some germs could be transferred	<p>A dedicated area away from the school grounds will be identified for the dog to use as a toilet during the day if needed.</p> <p>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.</p>		
Allergies	If a child is allergic to dogs they could become unwell	<p>Children will not be in contact with the school dog if we have received a negative response form from the parents/guardians. If a child has an allergy the school dog will not carry out tasks near the child.</p>	Medium	Ensure all staff are aware of students not permitted to engage with the school dog
Students' access to school dog's resources	If a pupil has access to the school dog's treats or food and eats some, they could become unwell	<p>All of the school dog's resources will be locked away. No pupil will be allowed to enter the school dog's area without authorisation.</p>	Low	Remind students not to enter the area

Contact with food preparation areas	If the school dog enters a food preparation area, this could be unhygienic	The school dog will be in a contained area or on a lead at all times around school.	Trivial	
		He will never enter the school kitchen.		
Cleaning hands after interacting with the school dog	If hands are not cleaned, students and adults could become unwell.	All adults and students will clean their hands after interaction with the school dog.	Low	Remind students and adults to clean their hands.
Covid 19 contamination	Pupils / staff possibly spreading the virus through interaction with the dog	The school dog will be wiped down regularly during the day with a damp cloth. His collar will be regularly disinfected during the school day. All adults and students will be encouraged to clean their hands after interaction with the school dog. Rufus will have no interaction with any person who is openly displaying symptoms of Covid 19.	Low – at present, there is no evidence that suggests animals play a significant role in spreading the virus. Based on the information available to date on government CDC website, guidance states the risk of animals spreading Covid 19 to people is considered to be low.	If there are any cases of pupils contracting Covid 19 and having had interaction with the school dog, Rufus will temporarily remain off site to avoid any possible further contamination. He will return once he has isolated the recommended timescales and there is no further risk of contamination

Area of Concern: Activities involving the school dog, including walking				
Reason for concern: 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 and how?	Step 3 What are you already doing?	Risk rating Trivial/Low/Medium/High/Stop	Step 4 Is there anything further needed?
Walking the dog on and off the site	Students 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 assessment procedures will take place. No students will take the lead when the school dog goes for a walk unless authorised to do so by the accompanying adult. No students will be allowed to interact with the school dog when he is on a school walk unless permission is given.	Medium	Careful consideration needs to be given to the amount of time the dog is allowed to walk around the school during breaktime and lunchtimes.
Visits to classrooms	If the school dog visits a classroom and the children do not follow the correct procedure, he may become over-excited.	The supervising adult handler will immediately remove the dog from any situation where it is felt the dog is becoming over excited. The school dog will mostly be in his designated area away from lessons.	Low	Careful consideration will be given to when the school dog can visit classrooms.

Being fed	If a child tries to interact when the school dog is eating, he may respond aggressively	No child will be allowed in the school dog's contained area when he is eating. Students may prepare the food for the school dog	Low	Reminders to the students feeding the school dog not to interact when he is eating.
		washing their hands afterwards. All feeding will be supervised.		
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 he will be under the control of a lead with a supervised 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 school site)	If the school dog is overwhelmed, he may become aggressive or boisterous	No other dogs will be allowed on the school premises. At no time will the school dog be walked by a child without adult supervision, and as a result if another dog is seen, this will be dealt with by the supervising adult.	Low	Monitor the school dog's reaction when walking outside

Timetable of working hours (September 2022)

	Rufus
Monday	8.00am – 4.30pm
Tuesday	8.00am – 4.30pm
Wednesday	8.00am – 4.30pm
Thursday	8.00am – 4.30pm
Friday	8.00am – 4.30pm