



Introduced:	Dec 2025
Next Review:	Dec 2027
Staff Responsibility	SBM
Governor responsibility	FGB
Signed by Chair	

School Therapy Dog Policy

Introduction

Research has shown that both 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. Therefore, the SLT at Barton Primary School have taken the decision to introduce a suitable dog into school to train to become a school therapy dog.

Principles

- The Executive Headteacher and Head of School both agree to a school dog ("Tiggy") being on the school site.
- Only the school dog (Tiggy) is allowed on the school premises. All other dogs must not come on site unless they are a known therapy or assistance dog and the Executive Head has approved their presence prior to the visit.
- An appropriate risk assessment has been written and shared with staff.
- Tiggy is a miniature labradoodle specially chosen because the breed is considered hypoallergenic and because it is an intelligent breed that will respond well to training and which is known to be good with children, sheds very little hair and is a very sociable and friendly breed of dog.
- Tiggy's legal owner is Mr Whiting, the School Business Manager. He has full responsibility for the welfare of the school dog and all expenses relating to pet insurance, food and other relevant expenses and for ensuring the dog is vaccinated, wormed and flea treated. Tiggy is also housed with Mr Whiting when not on site at school.
- In order to attain certification as a therapy dog Tiggy will attend weekly training sessions at Ability Dogs 4 Young People located in Sandown.
- The school's liability insurance covers the school for risk related to a therapy dog on site.
- The presence of a school dog will be sign posted to visitors at reception and the school website.
- Staff, parents and pupils will be informed in advance that there is a dog in school.
- Parents can indicate that their child is not allowed to be present during dog therapy sessions by contacting the school.
- Only staff trained to handle the dog in student sessions will have permission to do so.

Code of Conduct:

Staff Responsibilities

- Mr Whiting or a designated member of the admin team will know the whereabouts of the dog and which staff are supervising at all times.
- If the dog is ill she will not be allowed into school. Mr Whiting will have responsibility for ensuring appropriate care for Tiggy if she is not able to be in the school on a given day.
- Mr Whiting is responsible for ensuring that Tiggy is trained and certified as a therapy dog by Ability Dogs 4 Young People.
- Tiggy must be kept on a lead when moving around the school, between classrooms or on a walk and will be under the full control and supervision of a trained adult.
- Tiggy will be kept in the school office when not interacting with students for therapy or classroom sessions.
- Staff, visitors and children known to have allergic reactions to dogs must not go near Tiggy. The school office will keep a list of all students and staff with a reported allergy to dogs and ensures that all trained handlers for Tiggy know who these students and staff are.
- Staff leading therapy or reading sessions with Tiggy have a responsibility to ensure all staff, students or visitors present are happy for Tiggy to enter the room.
- Students must never be left alone with Tiggy and there must be appropriate adult supervision at all times.
- Students will be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog before any interaction during a therapy or reward session.
- If the dog is surrounded by a large number of children, the dog could become nervous and agitated. Therefore, the adult in charge of the dog must ensure that s/he monitors the situation. If the dog is displaying any warning signs such as growling or flattening of her ears, she should be immediately removed from that particular situation or environment by the trained staff member handling her.
- Any dog foul should be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately by the trained handling staff only.
- Tiggy will be included in the fire evacuation procedure under the supervision of a trained adult.

Student Responsibilities

- Students will not be allowed to be in the presence of Tiggy without an accompanying adult.
- Students should be careful to stroke Tiggy on her body, chest, back and not by her face or top of her head and can only do so after being invited to do so by her accompanying adult.
- Students are not allowed to approach Tiggy or disturb her whilst she is sleeping or eating.
- Students are not allowed to play roughly with Tiggy.
- Students must wait until Tiggy is sitting or lying down before touching or stroking her.
- Students are not allowed to eat during sessions with Tiggy.
- Students must always wash their hands after handling / stroking Tiggy.
- Students will be advised to understand that any deliberate violence or threatening behaviour towards Tiggy will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action.