

Lache Primary School

School dog risk assessment

**Introduction:**

The value of pet ‘therapy’ is widely accepted as a powerful aid to stimulation and communication. Studies have shown that the presence of companion animals can improve the well-being of children and lower the rate of anxiety, simply by making the environment happier, more enjoyable and less forbidding. Lache Primary School have been considering obtaining a dog as a school pet for some time and the decision was made to go ahead in the Summer term 2020.

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 also 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 ‘Scooby’ is invited to write to Mrs Seager and inform her of their wishes via a parent permission slip that will be sent out in September 2020. There are no diseases associated with the puppy as the dog will have had all the necessary immunisations and vaccinations, including rabies and will complete regular health checks and necessary treatment. Scooby will also be insured. The risk assessment below is a working document and will be checked annually by key staff and the governing body.

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| **Hazard** | **Risk** | **Risk 1 – 5\*** | **Controls in Place** | **Review date** |
| Dog getting over excited when interacting with children. | Child knocked to the ground.  Child scratched by dog.  Child is bitten by dog | 1  3  4 | The dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult and will never be allowed to roam freely around the school premises.  Children will not be left unsupervised with the dog.  The dog will be on a lead, carried or walk alongside an adult responding to commands, when he is not in his bed.  Pupils have been and will continue to be taught about the consequences of their actions. Education of this nature is continually given to children, and often to the whole school through assemblies and PSHE sessions. Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent the dog from chasing them. The dog will undergo formal training with an experienced ability dog trainer. The dog will also experience the school and classroom environment prior to meeting the children. This will support small group sessions to happen in a calm manner and will help to reduce the risk of scratching and biting. The risk assessment will be reviewed as he progresses through his training. All staff will have been introduced to the dog and expectations of having a school dog.  Scooby will attend the vets regularly to ensure he is in good health and that her claws are kept short. |  |
| The dog gets loose from her lead or leaves his bed | As above | 1 | The dog’s bed is big enough for him to be happy and safe during the school day and the children are taught not to tease him.  Puppy training will ensure he responds to commands. |  |
| The dog causing allergies. | Children or staff have allergic reactions | 1 | Parents have been asked to inform the school of any known allergies before the introduction of the dog to the school. A list of any children/staff who should not interact with the dog will kept on the school SIMs system. The children will have the opportunity to interact with the dog as their parent’s permission states. Parents can change their permission at any point and must do so in writing to the head teacher.  Children will be taught to wash their hands after active participation with the dog. |  |
| Children getting germs from the dog. | Children or staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs | 1 | Should the dog defecate on the school site a member of staff will clear this up immediately and dispose of it in a safe way. He will be trained to toilet in an area of the grounds that children have limited access to. The area will be disinfected as required. All immunisations will be kept up to date.  Flea treatment is carried out at 6 week intervals. The dog will not be allowed in the school dining hall at meal times; and never in the food preparation area. |  |
| Financial cost of the dog’s upkeep. | School unable to afford the ongoing cost of the Betty’s day to day upkeep or medical bills. | 1 | The dog is ultimately the responsibility of Mrs Seager both in a well -being and financial aspect. Scooby will be insured by the school and by Mrs Seager |  |
| Claim is made against school about the dog. | School not adequately covered financially. | 1 | Insurance will cover any claim. Certificate will be kept in office and renewed annually. |  |
| Signed by Chair of Governors:  Date: | | | | |