

**School Therapy Dog Risk Assessment**

**Nursling C of E Primary School**

**Date of Issue: March 2021**

**Review date: March 2022**



## 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.

The team at Nursling have been discussing introducing a school therapy pet for some time following the retirement of Nigel, the bearded dragon.

The rationale behind this decision was as follows:

- For the animal to be owned by a member of the staff team so that it is cared for outside of the school day.
- For the chosen animal to be of a breed and temperament that can interact with children and be of benefit to the children's social and emotional development.
- For the animal to have a safe space in school away from the children to relax and be able to rest.

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.

The Headteacher has recently bought a Cavapoo puppy and is willing to bring into school, initially to get her used to the surroundings, sounds and smells of school life and eventually, with appropriate training, to be as a support to children and adults mental health and well-being in the school community.

A Cavapoo is a mix between the Cavalier King Charles Spaniel and Poodle. It has the hypoallergenic fur of a poodle, meaning that they don't shed. Their loyal, social nature makes them a great family or therapy dog, especially for people with allergies.

The dog's owner will be responsible for upkeep including food, vaccinations, completion of health checks and necessary treatments as well as regular grooming to ensure nails are clipped to a suitable length.

Parents who do not want their child to interact with the dog are invited to email into the school office and inform of their wishes.

The dog will be insured.

The risk assessment below is a working document and will be checked annually by key staff and the governing body.

<b>Hazard</b>	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Controls in place to lower risk</b>
Dog getting over excited when interacting with children.	Child knocked to the ground. Child scratched by dog. Child bitten by dog.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult and will never be allowed to roam freely around the school premises.</li><li>• Children will not be left unsupervised with the dog.</li><li>• The dog will always be on a lead or carried</li><li>• Pupils have been and will continue to be taught about the consequences of their actions.</li></ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education of this nature is continually given to children, and often to the whole school through assemblies and PSHE sessions.</li> <li>• Education in the importance of cleanliness and washing hands after touching the dog.</li> <li>• Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent the dog from becoming over excited with a list of rules displayed by the dogs safe space.</li> <li>• All staff will have been introduced to the dog and expectations of having a school dog.</li> <li>• She will attend the vets and have regular grooming to ensure she is in good health and that her claws are kept short.</li> <li>• Therapy dog training will commence when the dog is old enough (1 year).</li> </ul>
Dog excrement & Urine	Staff and pupils – illness, slips and falls	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dog will be wormed, vaccinated and kept free of fleas, ticks etc by owner.</li> <li>• Any excrement or urine will be cleaned up immediately and thoroughly and safely disposed of.</li> <li>• Hand cleansing facilities made available close to where the dog will be housed.</li> <li>• A bag containing poo bags, kitchen roll, antibacterial spray, rubber gloves etc will be carried by member of staff walking the dog.</li> </ul>
Allergic reaction to Dog	Staff and pupils having an allergic reaction.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information given to parents and staff so that any problems raised can be dealt with</li> <li>• Dog to be kept clean and well groomed.</li> <li>• Dog bed in cage in office and baby gate on office door to ensure no accidental contamination.</li> <li>• Signs to be put up warning of dog presence and any expected procedures.</li> <li>• Office to be kept well ventilated.</li> <li>• Dog bedding and equipment washed and kept to a high standard</li> <li>• Daily vacuuming and cleaning of office.</li> <li>• Lint rollers to be provided to remove dog hair from clothes.</li> <li>• Hand cleansing facilities located in office and in toilet next door.</li> <li>• Notices up to advise where the dog may be encountered so can be avoided if necessary.</li> </ul>
Dog well-being when in school	Risk of the dog becoming over tired or over excited.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The dog will have a designated safe space in the Headteachers office.</li> <li>• The dog will have fresh water available at all times and treats available in school.</li> <li>• The dog will only be expected to be with children for a short amount of time (no more than 20 mins) before taking a break.</li> <li>• The dog will be walked during the day, outside of school grounds with any waste disposed of in bin at the end of the adjacent alleyway to school.</li> </ul>



**Nala  
Cavapoo**



**Nala's Mummy – Daisy  
Cavalier King Charles Spaniel**



**Nala's Daddy – Romeo  
Toy Poodle**