



# School Dog Risk Assessment

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St Christopher's Church of England High School

# St Christopher's CE High School Mission Statement

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**St Christopher's is a Church of England Academy where pupils and staff work together, in the knowledge and love of God. We try to act out our faith in daily life, with Christ as our example.**

Within our strong Christian, Anglican context, we seek to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of our pupils, growing together as a caring and supportive community whilst preparing them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of their adult lives.

We aim to achieve our mission by providing an environment which

- recognises that each member of the school community is an individual with specific needs and strengths
- fosters mutual respect and concern for others
- values the contribution made by each member of the school community
- encourages and celebrates positive achievement
- actively supports those in need.

## Foundation Scripture

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“Blessed is the one  
who does not walk in step with the wicked  
or stand in the way that sinners take  
or sit in the company of mockers,  
but whose delight is in the law of the LORD,  
and who meditates on his law day and night.  
That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,  
which yields its fruit in season  
and whose leaf does not wither—  
whatever they do prospers.”

(Psalm 1:1-3)

This scripture underpins all that we do and everything that we stand for as a school.

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C of E National Vision for Education .....	4
Worship .....	4
Chaplaincy Team.....	4
Assemblies.....	4
• Main Assembly	
• Year Assembly	
• Form Assembly	
Prayer .....	5
• Prayer Book	
• Holy Communion	
• Form Communion	
• Year Communion	
• Provision for Staff	
Spirituality Week .....	6
Staff Communions, Prayers and Special Communions .....	6
Worship and the Law.....	6
Spiritual Development.....	6
Core Values.....	7

## Background

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Mr Jones, the leadership team and the governors at St Christopher's CE High School have considered having a school dog for some time. The rationale to have a school dog is as follows:

1. For the school to have a pet that is able to live as naturally as conditions will allow.
2. For the animal to be properly cared for outside of the school day.
3. To have a pet that the pupils can interact with and also be of benefit to the pupil's social and emotional development.

Children can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills through contact with pets. In addition to these benefits, many children take great enjoyment from interaction with dogs. As dogs are one of the most popular pets, it is more than likely that children will have some exposure to a dog while still at school.

Is there a risk in bringing a dog into a school environment? Of course there is, though there are a variety of accidents which can happen within the school environment which far exceed the number of injuries or incidents caused by dogs. Therefore, it is just another risk that can be successfully managed. We should not lose sight of the fact that nearly all biting accidents are preventable and very often depend on the behaviour of the human prior to the accident. Only rarely does a dog bite without warning.

The dog will live with Miss Sutton in her home at her own expense and is to be introduced to the school environment and the pupils gradually. The school dog will be thoroughly checked for any illnesses and Miss Sutton is responsible for the vaccination programme. There are no diseases that could be caught from the school dog as they will be kept up to date with immunisations and his worming treatment is in line with European vet guidelines. A register of the dog's annual health check is kept both by Miss Sutton and the vets' surgery.

It is accepted that interacting with animals is not appropriate for all children but that for many it has the potential to provide many positive benefits. Any parent who does not wish their child to interact with the school dog is invited to write to inform school of their wishes. This risk assessment will be reviewed annually and the impact of a school dog will be evaluated by the school leadership team.

## Part A: Assessment Details

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<b>Area/task/activity:</b>	Dog in School
<b>Location of activity:</b>	St Christopher's CE High School
<b>School name:</b>	St Christopher's CE High School
<b>Address &amp; Contact details:</b>	Queens Road West, Accrington, Lancashire BB5 4AY
<b>Name of Person(s) undertaking Assessment:</b>	Devaki Sutton
<b>Headteacher (Name):</b>	Mr R Jones
<b>Date of Assessment:</b>	November 2023
<b>Planned Review Date:</b>	Annually
<b>How communicated to staff:</b>	In staff meeting and via email
<b>Date communicated to staff:</b>	November 2023

## Part B: Hazard Identification and Control Measures

List of significant hazards (something with the potential to cause harm)	Who might be harmed?	Type of harm	Existing controls (Actions already taken to control the risk)
General information	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers	All below	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff always refer to the CLEAPSS document GL211-An introduction to keeping and handling Therapy Dogs in schools. <a href="#">Follow this link for more.</a></li> </ul>
Poor hygiene	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers	Infection, illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cuts and abrasions on the exposed skin of hands and arms are to be covered before handling the dog;</li> <li>Pupils and adults must always wash their hands prior to handling the dog and as soon as possible afterwards or after coming into contact with bedding, toys water bowl etc.);</li> <li>The dog will not be allowed to walk unrestricted around classrooms;</li> <li>Dog house/cage/bedding is cleaned and disinfected regularly;</li> <li>In the unlikely event the dog gets onto tables etc. clean and disinfect them immediately;</li> <li>The responsible person will arrange to dispose of any uneaten dog food before it begins to decompose or attracts pests such as flies and vermin.</li> <li>The dog is not taken into food preparation areas including Food Technology classrooms.</li> </ul>
Manual handling	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers, visitors  Dog	Physical injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pupils and visitors are requested/instructed not to lift/carry the dog as this could injure themselves or the dog. Nominated members of staff supervise any interaction with the dog.</li> </ul>
Slips, trips and falls	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers, visitors  Dog	Physical injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good standards of housekeeping must be maintained at all times. The dog is moved around the building on a short lead by staff to reduce the risk of anyone tripping over the dog. Pupils are supervised by a nominated person at all times when handling the dog. All liquid and faeces are cleaned up immediately to reduce the risk of slips, trips and falls and also to reduce the risks from poor hygiene.</li> </ul>
Diseases, parasites and allergies	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers	Illness, allergic reaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents and carers are asked to identify any pupils known to have allergic reactions to the dog and these pupils are instructed and supervised to ensure they avoid all further contact with the dog;</li> <li>Medical assistance will be sought where an allergic reaction does not subside after a reasonable time-frame, the dog and the affected person will be kept apart;</li> <li>Dog food must be kept safe and secure to prevent unauthorised access and to keep away from pests.</li> </ul>

List of significant hazards (something with the potential to cause harm)	Who might be harmed?	Type of harm	Existing controls (Actions already taken to control the risk)
Infection/ill health	Dog  Staff, Pupils and Visitors		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The dog attends regular veterinary appointments for general health checks including treatments for worming, flea control and required vaccinations. Information about these visits are kept in the Dog Information folder held in the Careers Office. Miss Sutton is responsible for ensuring all relevant documentation is up to date and available as required.</li> <li>To reduce the risk of infection/bacteria spread when the dog has had a comfort break, a responsible person will ensure that all faeces are safely disposed of using appropriate personal protective equipment and poop scoop/poop bags (tied and disposed of in an external bin). If the exercise area is a hard surface e.g. tarmac or concrete, this must be washed down regularly to prevent staff, pupils and visitors coming into contact with harmful bacteria etc.</li> <li>If the dog is ill in school, it will be taken home/to the vets as necessary.</li> <li>If the dog is ill away from school it will be kept out of school until it has returned to full health.</li> </ul>
Therapy dog eating food in school	Dog	Physical injury/upset stomach	The dog must only eat its own food and treats and must not be fed by pupils without authority from and under the supervision of approved members of staff. All food should be kept out of the dog's reach e.g. in a store cupboard off the floor.
Dog behaviour	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers	Bites, scratches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pupils are warned of the general hazards and risks posed by some dogs;</li> <li>Procedures are introduced and pupils are taught the correct handling of the dog;</li> <li>The dog is closely supervised by an adult when in the presence of children;</li> <li>Pupils are closely supervised by an adult when in contact with the dog;</li> <li>A First Aid kit is available. Any dog scratches and bites must be carefully washed and a first aider contacted;</li> <li>In line with existing school procedures, all accidents/incidents will be reported and investigated;</li> <li>Consider the need for Dog Behavioural training <a href="https://archietherapy.com/">https://archietherapy.com/</a></li> <li>A notice is displayed in School Reception area informing when the dog is on the premises;</li> <li>All pupils, staff and visitors are made aware of the rules of behaviour when interacting with the dog;</li> <li>Miss Sutton will provide regular reminders about the dog's needs and what might make them worried/nervous/angry;</li> </ul>
Dog Welfare	Dog	General wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The dog is exercised regularly by a nominated person or supervised pupil.</li> <li>All gates must be kept closed/locked during exercise periods, regular checks of any fencing for breaches must be undertaken to ensure the dog cannot escape.</li> <li>The dog is taught to signal when it needs a comfort break or is taken out regularly to allow for comfort needs.</li> </ul>

List of significant hazards (something with the potential to cause harm)	Who might be harmed?	Type of harm	Existing controls (Actions already taken to control the risk)
Dog Welfare	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers	Dog death Pupil upset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any specific welfare conditions for the breed of dog have been considered prior to making the decision to allow a dog on site;</li> <li>Dog will have access to clean water throughout the day;</li> <li>Provision is made for the dog's welfare out of school hours e.g. the dog lives with Miss Sutton.</li> <li>The dog has regular veterinary health checks, if it isn't feeling well, it will be removed from the school environment until it is feeling better or treated by a vet.</li> <li>The dog is given regular breaks away from interacting with pupils.</li> </ul>
Cleanliness	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers, visitors  Dog	General wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular cleaning of all areas is carried out by Site Supervisor/Cleaner/nominated staff;</li> <li>Workplace Inspections are undertaken on a regular basis by Headteacher/ Site Supervisor/Cleaner/nominated staff;</li> <li>Miss Sutton ensures that the dog is cleaned/groomed on a regular basis prior to coming into school;</li> <li>The dog is kept in the Careers Office when not interacting with staff/pupils.</li> <li>Blankets/bedding and crate 'safe place' are cleaned on a regular basis, all blankets and bedding are cleaned off site by Miss Sutton;</li> <li>Windows can be opened to provide fresh circulating air;</li> <li>Air fresheners are available if required;</li> </ul>
Fire/Emergency Situation	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers, visitors  Dog	Physical Injury/ Fatality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The dog is accompanied at all times and will be taken to the Fire Assembly Point by Miss Sutton as they evacuate themselves;</li> </ul>
Noise	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers  Dog	Physical Injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Miss Sutton to instruct anyone coming into contact with the dog to keep noise levels low to avoid upsetting/startling the dog;</li> <li>Staff to monitor the behaviour of students and dog, including noise levels;</li> <li>The dog will be trained to tolerate some noise levels e.g. walking through the school playground during break times/lunch time;</li> </ul>
Security of Premises	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers  Dog	Physical Injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Controlled access, Safeguarding policy available;</li> <li>Staff to supervise pupils outside the building;</li> <li>The dog is restrained on a lead at all times;</li> <li>Gates are kept locked, Visitors cars and delivery vans come into the car park/Street Park/other e.g. permission to access school grounds is sought from the Headteacher/nominated person;</li> </ul>

List of significant hazards (something with the potential to cause harm)	Who might be harmed?	Type of harm	Existing controls (Actions already taken to control the risk)
Visiting other Schools/ Premises	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers  Dog	Physical injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consent is received from the Headteacher/Senior management team/other before arranging any visit to another premise;</li> <li>• Trained members of staff accompany and supervise the dog and pupils at all times;</li> <li>• If the dog needs to be transported, a suitable method is used e.g. strapped in with a safety device attached to seatbelt in the vehicle or is placed in their crate whilst travelling in the vehicle;</li> <li>• The dog is fed/watered and encouraged to take a comfort break prior to travelling;</li> <li>• Confirm date and time of visit prior to the initial visit by the dog, discussions between both parties are recommended;</li> <li>• Site is assessed to ensure suitability of a visit by the dog;</li> <li>• Pupil visit risk assessments to be undertaken/ reviewed as necessary;</li> <li>• Parent/Pupil consent forms to be completed;</li> <li>• The Headteacher/nominated person to reiterate responsibilities for the dog's behaviour on other premises e.g. if another adult is with the dog they need to understand how to handle the dog what to do/and what not to do;</li> <li>• Comply with all premises procedures;</li> <li>• Signage to be displayed indicating "Dog on Premises" while the dog is on site;</li> </ul>

**NOTE:** CLEAPSS have issued a number of guidance leaflets on keeping Therapy Dogs in school as well bringing pets, etc to school that schools may find useful in developing this risk assessment further:

- L56 – Housing and Keeping Animals;

This general risk assessment will apply to this area/task/activity in most schools providing the control measures described are in operation and there are no further local significant hazards. If it does not fully apply and further control measures are required, please complete the Action Plan at Part C. If it fully applies please sign below.

I certify that the risk assessment above fully applies to the area/task/activity under assessment in St Christopher's CE High School.

**Name:** Devaki Sutton  
**Risk Assessor:** Devaki Sutton











**That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,  
which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither-  
whatever they do prospers.**

Psalm 1:3



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**[www.st-christophers.org](http://www.st-christophers.org)**

