

The Dog Mentor

SCHOOL DOG MANAGEMENT PLAN

Purpose of the School Dog

The Dog Mentor programme supports student well-being, learning, and social development through structured interactions with a trained school dog. Providing comfort and companionship, the dog helps students regulate emotions, reduce anxiety, and build confidence. The presence of the Dog Mentor encourages positive behaviour, engagement, and teamwork while enhancing learning through reading initiatives, therapy, and personalised support for children with additional needs.

Accreditation Levels:

- **Bronze Award:** Earned during initial training, focusing on basic tricks and temperament assessment (certificate awarded).
- **Silver Award:** Given to handlers and owners after demonstrating effective skills and understanding of the dog's needs (certificate awarded).
- **Gold Award:** Achieved after successful programme implementation, proving commitment and the dog's positive impact (certificate awarded).

Support Materials Provided:

- High-visibility coat for the dog, ensuring they are easily identifiable and recognised as working within the school.
- Training equipment, such as clickers, to maximise positive behaviour reinforcement and facilitate effective training sessions.
- Personalised risk assessment, conducted during the initial training, to identify and mitigate potential hazards within the school environment.
- Dog Mentor Pet Planner, a comprehensive tool to monitor and maintain the dog's well-being, track progress, and schedule health checks. Schools are responsible for keeping this planner updated and informing us of any changes that may affect the dog's role or safety.
- Comprehensive folder containing learning theories, session advice, first aid information, dog care guidelines, and training advice, covering all aspects learned during the training day.

Ongoing Support and Resources:

We are committed to providing ongoing support to ensure the success of the Dog Mentor programme in your school. Our team is always available to offer guidance, address concerns, and assist with any challenges that may arise. Additionally, we offer a Padlet platform that provides supporting materials, resources, and a community forum to enhance your experience with the programme. This platform serves as a valuable tool for continuous learning and support.

Dog Selection & Suitability Checklist

When selecting a school dog, it's essential to ensure they have the right temperament, training, and health to thrive in a school environment. Jenny assesses all of the criteria below upon meeting the dog, and a dog will only be placed on the Dog Mentor programme if it meets these standards. However, once the dog is in the school setting, it is your responsibility to monitor its behaviour, well-being, and progress, ensuring that any changes are noted and communicated to us.

Temperament & Personality

- ✓ Friendly, calm, and enjoys being around children
- ✓ Confident but not overly excitable or reactive
- ✓ Tolerant of noise, unpredictable movements, and different environments
- ✓ Gentle and patient, without signs of aggression or fearfulness

Training & Socialisation

- ✓ Obedience trained (responds to basic commands: sit, stay, come, down, leave it)
- ✓ Comfortable around groups of children and adults
- ✓ Accustomed to being handled gently and respectfully
- ✓ Exposure to different environments, sounds, and situations

Health & Well-being

- ✓ Up-to-date vaccinations and parasite prevention (flea, tick, worming)
- ✓ Regular veterinary check-ups and health screenings
- ✓ Good hygiene (regular grooming, clean coat, trimmed nails)
- ✓ No underlying medical conditions that may cause distress or discomfort

Suitability for a School Setting

- ✓ Able to remain calm in busy or noisy environments
- ✓ Comfortable being on a lead and in controlled areas
- ✓ Happy to rest in a quiet space when needed
- ✓ Not prone to excessive barking, jumping, or mouthing

Care & Welfare

Ensuring the well-being of the school dog is a top priority. A happy, healthy dog is essential for a successful Dog Mentor programme. It is your responsibility to provide consistent care, monitor the dog's well-being, and record all relevant details in the Dog Mentor Pet Planner.

Daily Care & Basic Needs

- ✓ Access to fresh water at all times – Ensure the dog has clean drinking water throughout the school day.
- ✓ Regular feeding schedule – Follow a structured feeding routine with an appropriate, balanced diet.
- ✓ Toilet breaks – Provide regular and scheduled bathroom breaks in a designated outdoor area.
- ✓ A comfortable rest area – The dog must have a quiet, stress-free space to relax away from students when needed.

Health & Veterinary Care

- ✓ Routine vet check-ups – Keep up with annual health checks and vaccinations.
- ✓ Parasite prevention – Regular flea, tick, and worm treatments must be maintained.
- ✓ Grooming & hygiene – Regular brushing, nail trimming, and bathing as needed to maintain cleanliness and reduce allergens.
- ✓ Monitoring for illness or distress – Look out for any signs of discomfort, stress, or illness, and seek veterinary care when necessary.

Emotional Well-being

- ✓ Recognising signs of stress – If the dog shows signs of anxiety (e.g., excessive yawning, licking, avoiding interaction), allow them time to rest.
- ✓ Avoiding overstimulation – Limit sessions to prevent exhaustion and allow the dog adequate downtime.
- ✓ Positive reinforcement – Use praise and treats to reward good behaviour and reinforce training.

Your Role in Maintaining the Dog's Well-being

We provide the **Dog Mentor Pet Planner** to help you keep track of all aspects of the dog's care, including feeding, exercise, health checks, and behaviour monitoring. It is your responsibility to ensure the dog's needs are met daily and to update the planner regularly. If you notice any changes in behaviour, health, or suitability for the school environment, you must inform us immediately.

✦ **For additional guidance and resources, visit our Padlet:**

[!\[\]\(4fe57c3593bf1b21d272ae7ac8dfaf77_img.jpg\) Working with Your Dog Mentor](#)

Here, you can download another copy of your Dog Mentor Pet Planner, along with other helpful tips for caring for your dog's needs.

Supervision & Handling

To ensure the safety and well-being of both students and the school dog, clear supervision and handling procedures must be followed at all times. A designated staff member (Dog Handler) is responsible for the dog's care and supervision. Jenny has personally trained these staff members, and just like with the dogs, if she didn't believe they were right for the programme, they would not be approved.

Handling & Supervision Guidelines

- ✓ Only trained and approved staff members should handle the dog.
- ✓ Students must only interact with the dog under adult supervision.
- ✓ Clear rules should be taught to students to ensure respectful and safe interactions,

including:

- Approach the dog calmly and quietly.
- Ask permission before petting.
- No teasing, rough play, or feeding without approval.

Preparing Students for Dog Mentor Interactions

To create a positive learning environment, we teach schools the **Dog Mentor Breathing Technique** to help students regulate their emotions before meeting the dog. The dog can only enter the classroom when students have shown they are '**Dog Mentor Ready.**' This ensures a calm and safe atmosphere for both the dog and students.

✦ For resources on handling, supervision, and preparing students for Dog Mentor interactions, visit our Padlet:

[🔗 Dogs in School](#)

Here, you will find helpful guidance and tools to support you in implementing these strategies effectively.

Health & Safety Measures

Ensuring the safety of students, staff, and the school dog is a key priority in the Dog Mentor programme. Each school has its own personalised risk assessment, which is conducted during the initial visit when Jenny tours the school to ensure a thorough evaluation of potential risks.

Health & Safety Procedures

- ✓ Personalised risk assessment – Completed during Jenny’s initial visit to identify and address any specific school-related risks.
- ✓ Regular grooming & hygiene – The dog must be groomed regularly to reduce allergens and maintain hygiene as needed.
- ✓ Clear policies on managing allergic reactions, phobias, and bites/scratches – Schools must have a plan in place to support students who may have allergies or concerns about dogs.
- ✓ First aid preparedness – A dedicated first aid kit for minor dog-related injuries should always be available.

First Aid & Safety Support

As part of our initial training, we provide a First Aid section with detailed guides on handling minor injuries and ensuring the dog’s safety in the school environment.

✦ For additional resources on safety procedures, first aid, and risk assessments, visit our Padlet:

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School Environment & Access

Creating a safe and structured environment for the school dog is essential for a successful Dog Mentor programme. We provide a range of resources to help schools establish clear expectations and guidelines for students and staff.

◆ On our Padlet, you'll find:

- Posters to display around the school, letting children know when the dog is on-site.
- PowerPoint presentations and assembly guides to regularly educate students on how to behave around the school dog.
- Guidance on walking safely through doors – Teaching children how to move calmly and avoid rushing to ensure the dog's safety.

It is really important to share these resources with your school community to help maintain a safe and positive environment for the dog.

Managing the Dog's Access in School

- ✓ Structured schedule – The dog should follow a clear routine, including classroom visits, therapy sessions, and rest periods.
- ✓ Defined off-limit areas – The dog should not have access to food preparation areas, specific classrooms, or other restricted spaces.
- ✓ Supervised movement – The dog must be kept on a lead unless in a secure, enclosed area.
- ✓ Designated outdoor toilet area – A safe, hygienic space must be available for the dog's bathroom breaks.
- ✓ Calm transitions – Staff and students should ensure doorways are navigated safely, allowing the dog to enter and exit spaces without stress.

◆ For additional resources on school environment and access, visit our Padlet:

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Emergency & Exit Plan

Having a clear plan in place for emergencies is essential to ensure the safety of both the school dog and everyone on-site. This is covered as part of your school's personalised risk assessment, which is completed during Jenny's initial visit. Each school must have a plan for how to safely manage the dog in case of an emergency, including lockdowns, fires, or other urgent situations.

Emergency Procedures

- ✓ Fire Evacuation – The school's fire safety plan must include a designated exit strategy for the dog, ensuring they are safely removed from the building with their handler. We have fire evacuation advice available on our Padlet to support you with this.
- ✓ Lockdown Situations – A quiet, secure space should be identified where the dog can stay calm and safe if the school goes into lockdown.
- ✓ Alternate Care Plan – In the Dog Mentor Pet Planner, there is a section for an alternate care plan that must be completed and kept up to date. This ensures you always know who is responsible for the dog in an emergency or if the primary handler is absent.
- ✓ Sign-in Sheet for Reception – We provide a dog sign-in sheet that should be used at reception daily. This ensures that in case of an emergency, staff are aware of when the dog is on-site and can account for their safety.
- ✓ Emergency Relocation – If the dog becomes unwell or unsuitable for the school environment, there should be a contingency plan for temporary or permanent rehoming.

📌 Where to Find These Resources

🔗 Fire evacuation advice, alternate care plan templates, and sign-in sheets can all be found on our Padlet under "Dogs in School"

[Dogs in School](#)

📌 Risk Assessments

After Jenny's initial training and school tour, we will send over your school's risk assessment. It is then your responsibility to inform us of any changes that could affect the dog's safety so we can provide further guidance and support.