



Dogs in School Policy

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Date for Review	Every two years

Chatten Free School – Dogs in School Policy

Background and rationale

Research studies in both Britain and America have concluded that having a dog in a school can have many positive benefits including:

- Help to reduce anxiety
- Improve academic achievement
- Motivation
- Give positive reinforcement
- Encourage communication

Having a dog in school is very useful at Chatten. It provides interaction and communication opportunities for pupils who enjoy interacting with animals. Dogs can also be a calming presence for some pupils and interaction can act as a reward for others. Where pupils might struggle with dogs in the community access to a calm well trained animals can support in desensitization programs.

Aims of the policy

- To ensure that students, staff, Governors, parents and carers and members of the wider community can work safely alongside the dogs at Chatten Free School
- To ensure that dogs at Chatten Free School are well looked after and cared for.

Scope

This policy applies to all people who interact with the dogs on the school site including students, staff, parents and carers, Governors, visitors, companies who hire our facilities and contractors.

Dogs on roll

There is currently only one dog allowed on site at Chatten Free School. This is Nacho Dean. Nacho is a Labrador retriever owned by Adam Dean the head of school. If other animals are approved then this policy will be updated.

It is the dog owner's responsibility to ensure that vaccinations and treatments are up to date.

Insurance

Chatten Free School is covered by RPA insurance which includes animals on site.

Dog owners need to be aware of any students who do not have parental consent to be around dogs and also any students with a dog allergy.

General rules

- Dogs must be supervised at all times whilst on the premises. If dogs are left alone in work areas they must be restrained by baby gates, locked doors and/or crates.
- Dogs must be on a lead in the school building, in the playground, in the car park or in the immediate vicinity of the school building between 9:00 – 14:30 Monday to Friday (pupil times), term time only.
- Water, comforts and food must be provided for the dog.
- Any dog displaying aggressive behaviour will be removed immediately from the premises.
- Dog owners must ensure that any excrement is cleaned up immediately and thoroughly and disposed of responsibly and hygienically.
- Owners may be required to pay for any incidental cleaning requirements, damage and repairs to the building structure or furnishings caused by their dog.
- Owners are responsible for ensuring toys, bowls, etc. do not pose a slip/trip hazard and that any water spillage is attended to immediately.
- Dogs must not enter the main kitchen
- Any dog related incidents must be reported to a member of the Senior Leadership Team immediately.
- Owners are responsible for ensuring that their working areas are 'dog proofed' to ensure their animals do not chew on waste or any form of office equipment (i.e. electric wire, cords, carpet, etc.)
- Staff members who are not the owner of the dog will not feed the dog food other than approved treats provided by the owner.
- All staff and pupils will wash their hands after touching the dog.
- Only staff trained in the handling of the specific dog can be allowed to work with the dog and a pupil

Failure to comply with this policy and the associated risk assessment may result in the permission to bring the dog into school being withdrawn.

School Dog Policy – Simple Summary

Chatten Free School has a school dog to support pupils' wellbeing, learning and communication. Research shows that dogs in schools can help reduce anxiety, improve motivation and achievement, and encourage positive interactions. At Chatten, the dog is used as a calming presence, a reward, and to support pupils who may find dogs challenging in the community.

The policy aims to ensure that everyone can work safely around the school dog and that the dog is well cared for. It applies to all pupils, staff, parents and carers, governors, visitors and contractors on site.

Currently, only one dog is permitted on site: Nacho, a Labrador retriever owned by the Head of School. The owner is responsible for the dog's health, vaccinations and treatments. The school's insurance covers animals on site.

Dogs must be supervised at all times and kept on a lead during pupil hours. They must be well cared for, not enter the main kitchen, and any mess or damage must be dealt with immediately by the owner. Any aggressive behaviour will result in the dog being removed from the premises.

Staff must be aware of pupils who do not have consent to be around dogs or who have allergies. All interactions must be safe and controlled, with handwashing after contact. Only trained staff are allowed to work with the dog and pupils.

Any incidents involving the dog must be reported to senior staff. Failure to follow the policy may result in permission for the dog to attend school being withdrawn.