

Date: January 2025
Next review due: January 2026
**Responsibility: Bursar/Deputy Head of Junior School/
Compliance Officer**



DAME ALLAN'S SCHOOLS

DOGS POLICY

1. Introduction

Dame Allan's Schools have two dogs (one at the Senior Schools (DASS) and one at the Junior School and Nursery (DAJS)) who work with our pupils.

This policy sets out:

- The reasons for having school dogs;
- Measures and responsibilities to ensure the safety of pupils, staff, visitors and the school dogs.

2. The benefits of having school dogs

2.1 The value of dogs in schools has been widely accepted and research has shown that they can help develop pupils' reading skills, improve behaviour, attendance and academic confidence, as well as increasing their understanding of responsibility and helping them develop empathy and nurturing skills. In addition to these benefits, children take great enjoyment from interaction with a dog, resulting in improved well-being, lowered levels of anxiety and making the school environment a friendly, happy and homely place.

Research conducted at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD) to measure the impact of bringing dogs into the classroom has revealed that children respond positively to the presence of dogs, looking forward to reading sessions, and feeling more motivated and enthusiastic about engaging with learning. Sir Anthony Seldon, Vice Chancellor at the University of Buckingham suggested that an approach to reducing anxiety is the soothing presence of animals such as dogs.

2.2 The school dogs will be handled to ensure the dogs are not a nuisance and do not interfere with the school environment. If any pupil, parent or member of staff objects to

their presence then arrangements can be made to ensure the dog is kept away from them. If necessary, the dog may be excluded from specific areas. Whilst the Schools acknowledge that there are risks associated with bringing dogs into the Schools, it is a managed risk, which enables pupils to benefit greatly from their presence, in the following ways:

- A calming effect on pupils and an increasing sense of wellbeing across the Schools;
- Encouraging expression and participation in pupils;
- Fostering a sense of responsibility;
- Improved behaviour, concentration and improved self- esteem for pupils;
- Motivating pupils to think and to learn, as most children have a high level of natural interest in, enthusiasm for, and enjoyment of animals;
- Teaching pupils to nurture and respect life;
- Helping pupils to build confidence in reading.

2.3 The risk of having school dogs is one which needs to be managed. A thorough risk assessment has been carried out, which is available on the Staff Portal or upon request. Management of these risks is kept under regular review.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Governing body has responsibility to ensure that the Schools have a written policy for dogs in School.

3.2 The Principal is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

3.3 All members of staff, pupils, parents and visitors are required to abide by this policy.

4. Policy statements

4.1 The Principal and the Chair of Governors agree to the school dogs, **Heidi** and **Poppy**, working in DASS and DAJS.

4.2 Only the school dogs are permitted on the Schools' premises. All other dogs must not enter the schools' sites unless they are a known therapy or assistance dog and the Principal (for DASS) or Head of DAJS (for DAJS) has approved their presence prior to their visit.

4.3 The **school dog at DASS** is Heidi, who is a Maltese x Bichon Frise. Mrs Lowery is the legal owner of Heidi. Mrs Lowery has full responsibility for the welfare of Heidi and all expenses relating to pet insurance, food and other expenses and ensuring that she is vaccinated, wormed and flea treated. Mrs Lowery has produced a risk assessment which has been approved by the Bursar and the DASS Designated Safeguarding Lead and this will be reviewed annually. Heidi has attended dog training classes with a certified animal behaviour therapist and trainer and has achieved her Kennel Club Good Citizen Award. Maltese dogs are described as sweet tempered dogs who are good with people: the Bichon Frise has a superb temperament; it is an ideal companion dog, friendly, affectionate and enjoys contact with its human family. Heidi fits the description of both

breeds.

- 4.4 The **school dog at DAJS** is Poppy, who is a Border Terrier. Mrs Farren is the legal owner of Poppy. Mrs Farren has full responsibility for the welfare of Poppy and all expenses relating to pet insurance, food and other expenses and ensuring that she is vaccinated, wormed and flea treated. Mrs Farren has produced a risk assessment which has been approved by the Bursar and the DASS Designated Safeguarding Lead and this will be reviewed annually. Poppy is 11 years old and has been with the Farren Family since she was a puppy. Poppy is a pedigree dog, was purchased from a reputable breeder and comes from a long line of Kennel Club Registered dogs. Although Poppy has had no formal training, she has been well trained and is well socialised. By nature, the Border Terrier is good tempered, affectionate, obedient and easily trained. The Border Terrier is renowned for being excellent with people of all ages, and they make for an excellent best friend for children too. They are kind, affectionate and not prone to being snappy, and if they receive attention from the children, will often seek them out for a hug! Poppy displays all these characteristics and enjoys contact with both children and adults.
- 4.5 Both dogs will be included in the fire evacuation procedure for both School sites under the supervision of Mrs Lowery and Mrs Farren or other trained staff members.
- 4.6 The Schools' liability insurance covers the Schools for risk related to a working dog on the Schools' sites. The Bursar has responsibility for ensuring this remains on the Schools' policy during Heidi and Poppy's time working at the Schools.
- 4.7 The presence of the school dogs will be sign posted at the Schools' receptions and any visitors will be alerted to this.
- 4.8 Only staff trained to handle Heidi and Poppy in sessions with pupils have permission to do so.

5. Code of conduct

5.1 Staff responsibilities

- 5.1.1 Mrs Lowery and Mrs Farren will know the whereabouts of their dog and which staff are supervising her at all times. They will ensure that their dog is walked regularly throughout the school day and is given free time outside.
- 5.1.2 Mrs Lowery and Mrs Farren will not bring their dog into school if she is ill.
- 5.1.3 Heidi and Poppy must be kept on a lead when moving around the Schools or on a walk within the Schools' grounds and will be under the full control and supervision of Mrs Lowery or Mrs Farren.
- 5.1.4 Heidi will be kept in Mrs. Lowery's room in the Learning Support area/The Snug and any interaction with pupils will take place within that area. Heidi will be secured in the

learning support room if Mrs. Lowery is not present. Heidi attends DASS each Wednesday and on other days, as required for pupil support. Heidi occasionally goes into classrooms to see children.

- 5.1.5 Poppy can come to school any day of the week and will be kept in Mrs Farren's room at DAJS. Any interaction with pupils will take place in Mrs Farren's room or outside when on a wellbeing walk. Poppy will only be allowed in other areas of DAJS with Mrs Farren. If Poppy needs to be left alone in Mrs Farren's room, the door will be locked if necessary.
- 5.1.6 Staff, pupils and visitors who have known allergic reactions to dogs must not go near Heidi or Poppy. The Schools' nurse keeps a list of all pupils and staff with a reported allergy to dogs and ensures that all trained handlers for the dogs know who these pupils and staff are.
- 5.1.7 Staff leading sessions with Heidi or Poppy are responsible for ensuring all staff, pupils and visitors present are happy for the dog to enter and remain in the room.
- 5.1.8 Staff must never leave pupils alone with Heidi or Poppy and they must ensure that there is appropriate adult supervision at all times.
- 5.1.9 Before any session the member of staff leading the session must remind pupils of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog. Children should remain calm around the dog; they should not make any sudden movements; they should not put their face near the dog, should not stare into her eyes (as this could be threatening for her) and should always approach her standing up.
- 5.1.10 If the dog is surrounded by a large number of pupils, Heidi or Poppy, could become nervous or agitated. The adult in charge of the dog must ensure that this does not happen and in the unlikely event that it does, they must monitor the situation. If the dog displays any warning signs that she may be angry, threatened, frightened or nervous (for example, growling, bearing of teeth, flattening of her ears, tail lowered or between her legs, whining) she must be immediately removed from that situation or environment by the trained member of staff handling her.
- 5.1.11 Any dog foul must be cleaned up immediately and disposed of appropriately by the trained dog handling staff only.
- 5.1.12 Mrs Lowery, Mrs Farren and other trained handlers will maintain records and anecdotal evidence of the work and impact of Heidi and Poppy to inform whether it is beneficial for their dogs to continue to work with pupils at the Schools.
- 5.1.13 If anyone reports any issue with either dog, this information must be passed to the Principal or the Head of DAJS as soon as possible.

5.2 Pupil responsibilities

- 5.2.1 All pupils must follow the instructions of members of staff when in the presence of the dog.
- 5.2.2 Pupils are not allowed to approach Heidi or Poppy or disturb her when she is sleeping or eating.
- 5.2.3 Pupils are not allowed to play roughly with Heidi or Poppy.
- 5.2.4 Pupils must wait until Heidi or Poppy is sitting or lying down before touching or stroking her. They should stroke her on her body, chest or back, rather than on her face or the top of her head.
- 5.2.5 Pupils are not allowed to eat during sessions with Heidi or Poppy.
- 5.2.6 Pupils must always wash their hands after handling/stroking Heidi or Poppy.
- 5.2.7 Any deliberate violence or threatening behaviour towards Heidi or Poppy may result in sanctions against that pupil under the Whole School Behaviour Policy.