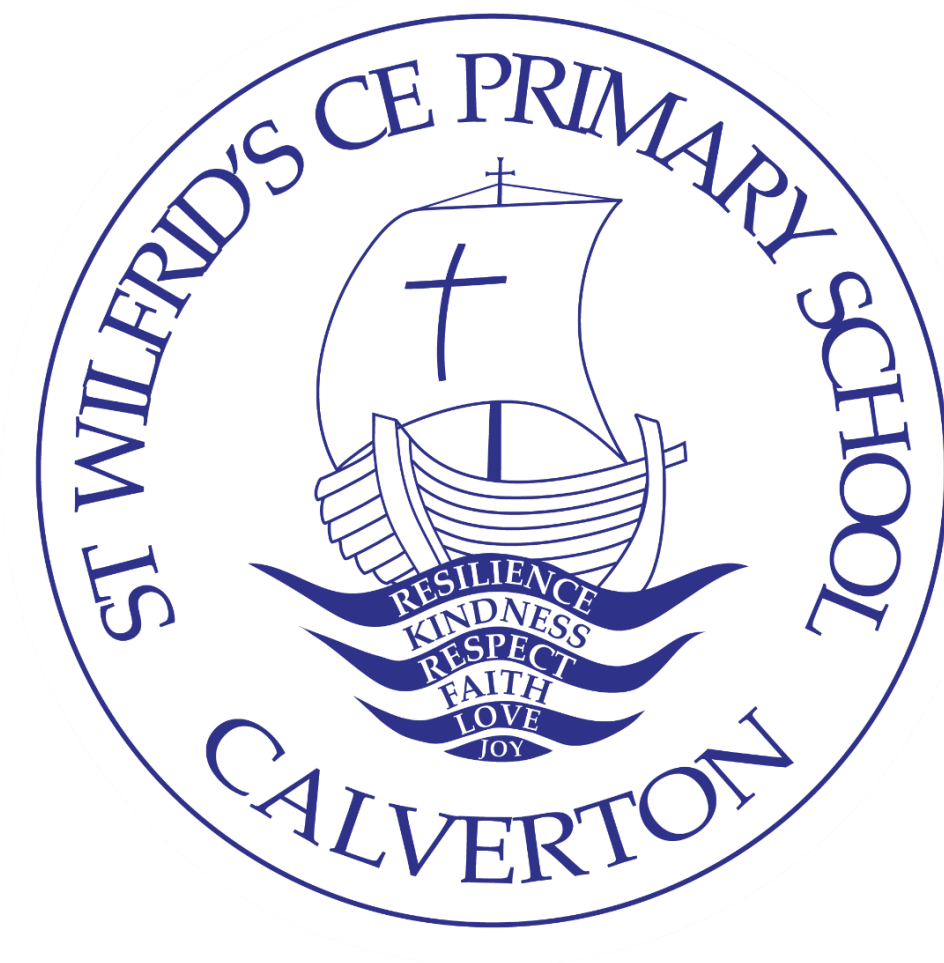




St Wilfrid's CE Primary School

School-Dog Policy

Approved:	13 th April 2026
Next Review:	

1. Policy Aims

- Support pupil wellbeing – including anxiety reduction, improved self-regulation, increased engagement and emotional based school avoidance.
- Provide SEND support – particularly for pupils who benefit from animal-assisted interventions.
- Promote positive behaviour, responsibility and empathy.
- Ensure compliance with Health & Safety, allergy management and DfE guidance on animals in schools.
- Protect the welfare of the dog at all times.

2. Scope

This policy applies to the therapy dog (hereafter *the dog*), all school staff, pupils, parents/carers, governors and visitors.

This policy does not permit other dogs onto site (the school's *no dogs on site* remains in force for all other animals).

3. The Therapy Dog

3.1 Identity and Role

- The dog is a Cavapoo, chosen for suitability as a therapy dog given its temperament (affectionate, intelligent, friendly).
- The dog's role is to support SEND pupils' regulation, wellbeing and planned interventions.

3.2 Ownership and Primary Handler

- The dog is owned and looked after by Mrs Streets, who is the designated handler with shared care by Miss Cousin during the school day.
- The handler is responsible for the dog's welfare, training, supervision and records.

4. Welfare of the Dog

- The dog's base location is the Den and Headteacher's office, a quiet and controlled environment.
- The dog will have regular rest breaks, fresh water, food and toileting opportunities in his home garden.
- The dog is never left unsupervised with pupils.
- The dog only works for limited hours per day with rest breaks scheduled.

5. Training, Behaviour and Competence

- The dog will undergo formal therapy training and socialisation prior to full introduction.
- Ongoing training, assessment and certification with a recognised external provider will be obtained.
- The dog must demonstrate calm, predictable behaviour before participating in direct pupil activities.
- Any warning signs (e.g., growling, avoidance, stress cues) will result in immediate withdrawal from interactions.

6. Risk Assessment & Health & Safety

A full Risk Assessment will be maintained and updated regularly. Key risk controls include:

6.1 Supervision

- The dog is always accompanied by the handler or an approved staff member.
- Pupils are only permitted to interact with the dog when supervised and with permission.
- When the dog is in a crate in an enclosed play pen, the children will not be permitted to be with the dog.

6.2 Hygiene

- Pupils and staff must wash hands before and after contact with the dog.
- The dog is kept clean, regularly groomed and parasite-treated.
- The dog stays away from food prep and eating areas (e.g. dining hall).

6.3 Toileting

- The dog is toilet trained. Toileting takes place in the designated outdoor area where children do not go (ie the dog's home garden).
- Handwashing and appropriate cleaning protocols are followed.

6.4 Movement

- The dog is on a lead when moving around school and always with an adult.

7. Allergy & Phobia Management

- Although Cavapooos are considered hypoallergenic, some individuals may still react.
- Parents/carers must declare known allergies to animals before any planned interaction.
- Pupils or staff with severe allergies or phobias will not be required to interact with the dog and alternative arrangements will be provided.
- Risk assessment and cleaning plans will mitigate allergen exposure.

8. Consent and Communication

- Parents/carers can opt out if they do not wish their children to participate in sessions with the dog. This can be done by letting Miss Cousin, the office or Mrs Streets know.
- Parents/carers will be informed about the dog's presence, times and safety controls.
- Staff will also be briefed on procedures and expectations.

9. Insurance & Legal Compliance

- The handler will maintain public liability and indemnity insurance that explicitly covers the dog's activities in the school setting.
- Insurance confirmation will be provided to the school and checked with RPA or the school's insurer.

10. Safeguarding & Behaviour

- The dog will not be linked with any pupils without consent and a planned activity.
- Pupils will be taught appropriate behaviour around the dog (calm approach, no sudden movements, gentle touch).
- Any incident (e.g., scratch, bite) is treated seriously; first aid is provided and documented, and suitability of the dog's involvement reviewed.

11. Record Keeping and Review

- Records maintained include training certificates, insurance documentation, risk assessments, incident reports, consent forms and health checks.
- This policy and supporting documents are reviewed annually or sooner if needed.