St Wilfrid's CE Primary School

School Dog Policy

Approved:	**3rd November 2026**
Next Review:	**As required with any changes**

1. Policy Aims

The purpose of having school dogs is to:

- 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 wellbeing interventions.
- Promote positive behaviour, responsibility and empathy.
- Ensure compliance with Health & Safety, allergy management and Department for Education guidance on animals in schools.
- Protect the welfare of both school dogs at all times.

2. Scope

This policy applies to the school dogs, all school staff, pupils, parents/carers, governors and visitors.
This policy does not permit other dogs onto the school site. The school's **No Dogs on Site** rule remains in force for all other animals.

3. The School Dogs

3.1 Identity and Role

St Wilfrid's CE Primary School has two school dogs.

- The Cavapoo is the school's wellbeing and support dog. The Cavapoo has been chosen for its affectionate, intelligent and friendly temperament and supports SEND pupils' regulation, wellbeing and planned interventions where appropriate.
- The Havanese is an additional school dog. The Havanese is a gentle, friendly and intelligent breed that provides a calm, positive presence within the school environment.

Both the Cavapoo and Havanese are considered hypoallergenic breeds, as they produce less loose hair and dander than many other breeds. However, no dog is completely hypoallergenic.

The Havanese is not a therapy dog and will simply be around school as part of the school community. It may be present around different areas of the school but will not be used as a therapy dog or for formal therapeutic interventions.

3.2 Ownership and Primary Handler

- The Cavapoo is owned and looked after by Mrs Streets and the Havanese by Miss Cousin.
- Both handlers are responsible for the dogs' welfare, training, supervision and records.

4. Welfare of the Dogs

- The **Cavapoo's base location** is **The Den**, providing a quiet and controlled environment for planned wellbeing and support work.
- The **Havanese's base location** is **Miss Cousin's Office and the Main Office**.
- Both dogs have regular rest breaks, access to fresh water and food, and toileting opportunities at home.
- Neither dog will ever be left unsupervised with pupils.
- Both dogs are only present in school for appropriate periods during the day and have scheduled rest breaks.
- The dogs' welfare will always take priority over any planned pupil interaction or activity.
- If either dog requires rest, becomes unsettled or shows signs of stress, it will be removed from the school environment or placed in its designated quiet area.

5. Training, Behaviour and Competence

- Both dogs have undergone appropriate training and socialisation before being introduced into the school environment.
- Ongoing training and assessment are maintained to ensure they remain calm, confident and well suited to a school setting.
- Both dogs have demonstrated calm, predictable behaviour before participating in pupil interactions.

- Both dogs are accustomed to being around adults, children and the normal sounds and activity associated with a school environment.
- Any warning signs, for example growling, avoidance or signs of stress, will result in the dog being immediately withdrawn from interactions until it is appropriate to return.
- The dogs will only interact with pupils when appropriate and under adult supervision.

6. Risk Assessment & Health & Safety

A full Risk Assessment will be maintained and updated regularly.

6.1 Supervision

- Both dogs are always accompanied by Mrs Streets, Miss Cousin or another approved member of staff.
- Pupils are only permitted to interact with either dog when supervised and with permission.
- When either dog is in a crate or enclosed play pen, children will not be permitted to be with the dog.
- Pupils will never be expected to interact with either dog.

6.2 Hygiene

- Pupils and staff must wash their hands before and after contact with either dog.
- Both dogs are kept clean, regularly groomed and appropriately treated for parasites.
- Both dogs receive appropriate veterinary care and vaccinations.
- The dogs stay away from food preparation and eating areas, including the dining hall.

6.3 Toileting

- Both dogs are toilet trained.
- Toileting takes place in a designated outdoor area away from children, namely the dogs' home garden.
- Handwashing and appropriate cleaning protocols are followed.

6.4 Movement Around School

- Both dogs are kept on a lead when moving around school and are always accompanied by an adult.
- The dogs will only enter areas of the school where their presence is considered appropriate and safe.
- Where necessary, the dogs can be kept within their designated offices or quiet areas.

7. Allergy & Phobia Management

- The Cavapoo and Havanese are considered hypoallergenic breeds, as they produce less loose hair and dander than many other breeds. However, no dog is completely hypoallergenic.
- Parents/carers should declare any known allergies to animals before any planned interaction.
- Pupils or staff with severe allergies or phobias will not be required to interact with either dog, and alternative arrangements will be provided.
- Parents/carers may opt out if they do not wish their child to have contact with either dog.
- If a child has opted out, the school will ensure that the dogs are kept away from that child without any difficulty.
- As the Havanese is based in Miss Cousin's Office and the Main Office, and the Cavapoo is based in The Den and the Headteacher's Office, arrangements can easily be made to avoid contact where required.
- Pupils who have opted out will not be disadvantaged or excluded from any aspect of school life as a result.

8. Consent and Communication

- Parents/carers will be informed that the school has two dogs on site.
- Parents/carers can opt out if they do not wish their children to participate in activities involving or have contact with either dog.
- An opt-out request can be made by informing Miss Cousin, the School Office or Mrs Streets.
- The school will respect all opt-out requests and will ensure appropriate arrangements are in place.
- Parents/carers will be informed about the dogs' presence, their general location within school and the safety measures in place.
- Staff will also be briefed on procedures and expectations relating to the dogs.

9. Insurance & Legal Compliance

- The handler will maintain appropriate public liability and indemnity insurance that covers the dogs' activities and presence in the school setting.

- Insurance confirmation will be provided to the school and checked with the school's insurer where required.
- The school will ensure that relevant health and safety and safeguarding requirements are considered within the school's risk assessment.

10. Safeguarding & Behaviour

- The dogs will not be linked with individual pupils without appropriate staff supervision and a planned activity where required.
- Pupils will be taught appropriate behaviour around the dogs, including calm approaches, no sudden movements, respecting the dog's space and gentle touch when invited.
- Pupils will be reminded that dogs need quiet time and that they must not disturb a dog when it is resting, eating or in its crate.
- Any incident involving either dog, such as a scratch or bite, will be treated seriously.
- First aid will be provided where appropriate, the incident will be documented and the circumstances will be reviewed.
- Following any significant incident, the suitability of the dog's continued involvement in school will be reviewed.

11. Record Keeping and Review

Records maintained include:

- Training and socialisation records.
- Veterinary health and vaccination records.
- Grooming and parasite treatment records.
- Insurance documentation.
- Risk assessments.
- Incident reports, where applicable.
- Parent/carer opt-out records, where relevant.

This policy and its supporting documents will be reviewed annually or sooner if circumstances change, an incident occurs or there is a significant change to the dogs' role within school.