Change	Reason Reviewer / Legislation	Date
P1 statement of intent Added “When a staff member brings a dog into school, after seeking permission from the HoS, the dog will remain the sole responsibility of the owner who must ensure that their plans for the day are not hindered by the presence of their dog.”	More dogs are present at school (which is a good thing) but the owners need to ensure the dog is well looked after DE	September 2025
P3 2.2 Changed to now read “All dogs that are on site must be members of The Dogs Trust as this ensures 3rd party liability. The Dog’s Trust is currently not accepting new members but does cover existing members and will allow existing members to renew their cover. If the owner is not a member of the Dogs Trust they must provide robust evidence that their dog has liability insurance whilst at their place of work	Dogs Trust membership has been suspended whilst they review their T&Cs. Any new dog on site must meet the requirement and provide proof to HR	October 2025
Removed any reference to Dog’s trust as they no longer offer 3rd party liability insurance	DE	January 2026

Dogs in school Policy

Date Approved	01/10/2025
Review date	01/10/2028

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Statement of intent

Inclusive Education Trust believes that allowing dogs on site is an effective way of maximising the educational opportunity and attainment of our pupils.

Whilst allowing dogs at our school is particularly beneficial to our pupils, we understand that we have a legal duty of care towards any dogs we are responsible for, and that this must be a priority at all times. This policy has been created in order to outline the key responsibilities and procedures for pupils and staff when looking after dogs.

When a staff member brings a dog into school, after seeking permission from the HoS, the dog will remain the sole responsibility of the owner who must ensure that their plans for the day are not hindered by the presence of their dog.

1. Dogs in School

1.1. Children can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills through contact with a dog. In addition to these benefits, children take great enjoyment from interaction with a dog.

1.2. In summary, academic research has shown that dogs working and helping in the school environment can achieve the following:

- Improve academic achievement
- Increase literacy skills
- Calming behaviours
- Increase social skills and self-esteem
- Increase confidence
- Teach responsibility and respect to all life
- Help prevent truancy

• Motivate children who are often less attentive

The following information has been taken from a range of sources to provide further detail about the benefits of having a dog in school:

Behaviour:
• In some schools, dogs are making a difference in the behaviour of pupils. Researchers report that students can identify with dogs, and with empathy for the dog, can better understand how classmates may feel.
• It was found that violent behaviour in participating students declined by 55%, and general aggression went down 62%.
• Behaviour problems occur in school, and these can interfere with learning. Some schools are using dogs to improve behaviour problems by promoting positive behaviour in students. • In a controlled study, students were found to have fewer disciplinary referrals in schools with a dog than schools without.
• Students' behaviour improved toward teachers, and students also showed more confidence and responsibility.
• Additionally, parents reported that children seemed more interested in school as a result of having a dog at school.

Reading programmes with dogs
• Children who might be embarrassed to read aloud to the class or even adults are likely to be less scared to read to a dog. "It might be less stressful for a child to read aloud to a dog than to a teacher or a peer. After all, a dog won't judge or correct you."
• Dogs are used to encourage struggling readers to practise reading aloud. With the presence of a "calm and well-trained dog," students find social support and peer interaction.
• Dogs are incredibly calm and happy to have student read to them or join a group of children in the library whilst they are having a book reading session.
• Dogs give unconditional acceptance, as they are non-judgmental, which is especially crucial to struggling, emerging readers.
• The dogs also provide confidence to children as they do not make fun of them when they read, but above all they make amazing listeners, providing the children with a sense of comfort and love.
• Research has proved that students who read to dogs show an increase in reading levels, word recognition, a higher desire to read and write, and an increase in intra and interpersonal skills among the students they mix with.
Social Development:
• Dogs in school offer an opportunity for improving social development.
• They are especially useful for teaching students' social skills and responsibility. • Specifically, schools are using dogs to help older students build self-esteem; learn about positive and negative reinforcement, responsibility, and boundaries.
• Older students use dogs to help communicate, teach kindness, and empower students. • With a dog in school, students have the opportunity to learn how to care for the dog. This includes walking and grooming.
• Researchers report that involving students in the daily care of classroom dogs is a positive experience, promoting their own daily care.
• The students also learn about responsibility, caring, and sharing when helping each other take care of a dog at school.
• Dogs can work with students on a one-one basis and will especially help those students who have been bullied, abused, going through upsetting/difficult times or even scared/phobic of dogs.
• The dog will bring much joy and help to all the students they meet and are happy to provide plenty of hugs to the students they are spending time with.
• Students who struggle with social interaction can find a reassuring friend in a dog.

As a reward:
• Dogs will be gentle and loving, but at the same time full of fun and enjoyment for the students. • Those students who have performed incredibly well during the week or those who have made progress in a certain subject, or those who have achieved tasks set for them, will be rewarded with spending time during lunch or break to interact with these dogs.

• Walking, grooming, playing and training are some of the responsibilities students will be allowed to undertake.
• It has been proved that working and playing with a dog improves children's social skills and self-esteem.

2. Insurance

2.1. The owner of the dog must have liability insurance for their dog in case of any third-party claims; this is not the responsibility of the school.

3. Legal framework

3.1. This policy has due regard to statutory legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:

• The Pet animals Act 1951
• The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
• The Dangerous Wild Dogs Act 1976
• The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
• The animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986
• The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
• The animal Welfare Act 2006

3.2. This policy also has due regard to school policies, including, but not limited to, the following:

• Health and Safety Policy
• First Aid Policy

4. Duty of care

4.1. The Animal Welfare Act 2006 places a duty on schools to make provision for the welfare of any animal that they are responsible for.

4.2. Under this Act, the welfare of an animal includes the following criteria:

• Its need for a suitable environment
• Its need for a suitable diet (food and fresh water)
• Its need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns
• Its need to be housed with, or away from, any other animals
• Its need to be protected from pain, suffering and disease

4.3. The head of Centre will conduct a risk assessment prior to the arrival of the dogs to ensure that all risks are manageable and are controlled.

4.4. This will include the provision of assurances from the owner as to the means of transporting and housing the dog, and the responsibility to bring any equipment, food or water likely to be required during the day.

4.5. The owner will be responsible for the welfare of the dogs at all times.

5. Risk Assessments

5.1. All dogs on the school site will have an individual Risk Assessment (Appendix 1)

6. Food

6.1. Food for the dogs will be the responsibility of the owner

6.2. All dogs must have continuous access to a supply of clean, fresh drinking water.

6.3. Troughs and other containers must be suitable for the dogs using them (e.g. the correct height and dimension to allow easy access) and must be easy to clean.

7. Dog handling

7.1. Pupils will naturally wish to handle dogs, but the following considerations must be checked in advance of any such activities:

- The dog is used to being handled.
- The dog is not likely to be stressed by excitable children.
- Where there is a correct way to hold any dog, this is taught to children from the outset.

7.2. If dogs will be handled, the most important issue is the maintenance of good hygiene. When handling dogs:

- Do not consume food or drink.
- Cover any open cuts or abrasions on the exposed skin of hands and arms with waterproof adhesive dressings.
- Wash your hands with soap and water before and directly after handling dogs. • Keep dogs away from your face.

7.3. Children must be taught by staff the correct way to hold each dog.

7.4. Careful handling of dogs is most important.

7.5. Dogs will be given adequate rest periods away from disturbances.

8. Infestation and disease

8.1. Cleaning routines and arrangements for the disposal of dog waste will be carried out with due regard for good hygiene standards. Pregnant staff and anyone with suppressed immunity will exercise caution and avoid all contact with dog waste products.

8.2. No child or member of staff will be asked to clear up any dog waste, this is the responsibility of the owner.

8.3. All members of staff are responsible for identifying ill health of the dogs and reporting any concerns to the headteacher.

8.4. The likelihood of diseases being passed on to humans from pet dogs is low. In all cases, good hygiene practices will be observed to reduce the risks even further.

8.5. The owner is responsible for the general health of their dog, including keeping up with vaccinations and ensuring the appropriate dogs have been treated for worms and fleas.

8.6. Children with known allergies to specific dogs must, of course, have restricted access to those that may trigger a response. In most cases, an allergic reaction will subside once the dog and the affected person are kept apart; in extreme cases, medical advice will be sought. If there are ongoing concerns the presence of the dog on site will be reviewed

8.7. If a member of staff has allergies to specific dogs, then the presence of the dog on site will be reviewed

8.8. In any case of infestation or disease, appropriate treatment will be sought immediately, and the dog(s)

will not be allowed on the school site until they are back to full health.

8.9. If the dogs are found to have any disease which is contagious to humans, the headteacher will inform parents/carers immediately and the dog(s) will be removed from the premises for appropriate treatment.

9. Injuries sustained to pupils and staff

9.1. Any injuries sustained to pupils or staff during the looking after of the dogs will be reported to the headteacher immediately and will be dealt with in accordance with the school's First Aid Policy.

9.2. All incidents will be reported using the Dog Incident Log (Appendix 2)

10. Bringing pets and other dogs into school

10.1. In addition to the general guidance given above, it is important that suitable arrangements are made in advance for the well-being of dogs for the time they are to be on the premises.

10.2. When a variety of dogs will be together, consider the possibility of unwanted interactions.

10.3. All staff must ask permission from the CEO or Director of Education before bringing a dog on site

10.4. Having a Dog on site must not distract the staff from their general duties

10.5. A school site can have a maximum of two dogs at any given time, unless prior agreed by the CEO or Director of Education

11. Unsuitable dogs

11.1. Dogs that present unacceptable risks must not be brought into the school.
11.2. Breeds with lockjaw ability or herding instincts are not allowed.

12. Monitoring and review

12.1. This policy will be reviewed every three years by the designated member of staff, in conjunction with the Headteacher, who will communicate any changes to all members of staff.

Appendix 1: Risk Assessment Template

DOG RISK ASSESSMENT

A risk assessment should cover the risks that are reasonably foreseeable. This includes assessing and planning for contingencies arising from foreseeable changes.

Background

The benefits of Dog company and the positive effect upon the mental well-being of vulnerable children and adults is both well documented and proven.

As such it has been encouraged to bring suitable dogs into the school environment to support both the social need and mental wellbeing of our students. It is therefore necessary to ensure that this is done with recognition and procedures in place to ensure both the safety and wellbeing of both staff and students.

ALL visiting dogs must first be vetted and agreed by HOS or HOC and any breeds with Lockjaw ability or Herding instinct must not be considered for school visits.

Hazard (something with the potential to cause harm)	**What could go wrong?**	**What is done now that helps control the risk?**	**Is the risk still high, medium or low?**	**What extra controls need to be put in place?**	**By when**	**By whom**
Dogs get over excited when interacting with children.	Child knocked to ground Child scratched by Dog Child bitten by Dog	The dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult and will never be allowed to freely roam the school premises. Children are not left with the dog unsupervised. The dog will be trained not to jump up or bite the children. Pupils have been, and continue to be, taught the impact of their actions. Education of this nature is continually given to children, and	Medium	Risk Assessment to be shared with all staff. Recognised owner of Dog to be present in the Dogs company at all times. Dog to be removed from the presence of a child in crisis. Students to be taught the correct		

		often to whole school during assemblies, form time and PSHE lessons. Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent the dog from chasing them. (i.e. stand still, cross arms) Dog will attend the vets' regularly to make sure claws are kept short and is also walked on concrete/tarmac to keep them trimmed		behaviours around dogs prior to visits. All visiting pets to be vetted by HOS or HOC Prior to visit.		
Dog hair cause allergies	Children/Staff have allergic reactions	Parents are asked to inform the school of any known allergies prior to introduction of a dog to school. A list of any children who should not interact with the dog to be kept in the site office. Children/Staff will have the opportunity to interact with the dog as they wish and those with allergies will be able to opt out of interaction. Children/Staff to be taught to wash their hands after active participation with the dog.	Low	Risk Assessment to be shared with all staff. Contact to be made with Parents prior to visit to provide information in relation to allergies. In cases of severe allergies Dog visits are not to be allowed. Students are taught how to wash hands after interaction with pets.		

Children getting germs from the dog.	Children/staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs	Should the dog defecate on the school site a member of staff will clear this up immediately and dispose of it in a safe manner. The area will then be disinfected with an appropriate animal disinfectant. All immunisations (including rabies vaccination where the dog has been abroad) are kept up to date in accordance with European Pet Passport scheme and vetted by the HOS or HOC. Flea treatment is carried out at 6 weekly intervals. Worming treatment is carried out in line with European Vet guidelines, at 6 monthly intervals. • The dog will never go into the food preparation area of the kitchen or classroom during food related lessons.	Low	Risk Assessment to be shared with all staff. Students are taught how to wash hands after interaction with pets. Appropriate cleaning materials to be provided by the Dog handler. Immunisation and treatments to be vetted by the HOS or HOC.		

Date Risk Assessment Completed: Completed by:

Appendix 2: Dog Incident Log

Date and time of incident:	Reported by:	Recorded by:	Description of incident:	Was property damaged? (Y/N)	Were pupils or staff placed in danger or harmed? (Y/N)	Recommended actions: