



Policy Directive and Guidelines

DOGS AS THERAPY IN SCHOOLS

Publication Date:	July 2019	Version Date:	2020.12.21
Review Date:	June 2022	Version Number:	V1.1
Contact:	Director of Operations (Social Security, Education & Inclusion)		
	 : educationsportandculture@gov.gg  : Sir Charles Frossard House La Charroterie St Peter Port GY1 1FH  : +44 (0)1481 224000 www.gov.gg/education		
Document Status <i>This is a controlled document. Whilst this document may be printed, the electronic version posted on the ConnectED Intranet is the controlled copy. As a controlled document, it should not be saved onto local or network drives but should be accessed from the ConnectED Intranet.</i>			

Contents

Summary of Changes from Previous Versions.....	4
1.0 Introduction	5
1.1. Policy Statement	5
1.2 Policy Objectives	5
1.3 Policy Application.....	5
1.4 Accountabilities.....	5
1.5 Linked Documents.....	5
2.0 Definitions.....	5
3.0 Requirements.....	6
3.1 Clarity of Objectives and Impact on School Operations	7
3.2 Suitability of the Dog and Handler.....	7
3.2.1 Training, Temperament and Condition	7
3.2.2 DBS / Supervision.....	7
3.3 Insurance.....	8
3.4 Risk Assessment and Safety Procedures.....	8
3.4.1 Cynophobia - a Fear of Dogs.....	8
3.4.2 Allergies to Dogs	8
3.5 Communication.....	9
3.6 Handler Awareness of Responsibilities.....	10
3.7 Supervising Staff Member Awareness of Responsibilities.....	10
3.8 Preparation of a School Procedure	11
4.0 Incidents.....	11
5.0 Removal of a Therapy Dog from School	11
6.0 Other Dogs on School Grounds.....	11
6.1 Pet Dogs	11
6.2 Dogs ‘In Training’ with an Appropriate Organisation to Become Therapy Dogs.....	12
6.3 Assistance Dogs and ‘Individual School’ Therapy Dogs	12
7.0 Relevant Research.....	13
Appendix 1: Assessment of Training and Temperament and List of ‘Appropriate’ Organisations	14
Appendix 2 Dog Condition	16

Appendix 3 Risk Assessment for Dogs as Therapy in Schools.....17
Appendix 4 Sample Communication to Parents20

Summary of Changes¹ from Previous Versions

Version no/Date	Change	Comment	Section/ Page
v1.0 (3 July 2019)	New policy	Draft consulted on during May/June 2019. V1.0 incorporates feedback	
V1.1 (21 Dec 2020)	Interim updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates to titles & branding • Update to Appendix 1 • Minor amendments in line with experience since policy introduction 	<p>Addition of WAG as an ‘Appropriate Organisation’ endorsed by the SVO</p> <p>Additional detail on exclusions/controls under the Guernsey Control of Dogs Ordinance; Content/references added about Alderney (Ordinance, and policy exclusion/controls)</p> <p>Records to be kept to demonstrate compliance with requirements, and re-checks on elements that require periodic renewal</p> <p>Additional sign-posting to the limited exceptions for dogs ‘in training’</p> <p>Addition of reference to Critical Incident policy</p>	<p>Throughout</p> <p>Appendix 1</p> <p>s3.0, f/note 4, s6.1</p> <p>s3.0</p> <p>s3.2.1, Appendix 2</p> <p>s4.0</p>

¹ Material changes only. Minor changes (such as to punctuation, grammar, etc.) will not be listed

1.0 Introduction

1.1. Policy Statement

Research indicates that contact with a dog can benefit children both educationally and emotionally in a number of ways². It is, therefore, recognised that having dogs in schools for educational/therapy purposes can have significant value. However, the health and wellbeing of the school community must be the school's main concern, and the dog's wellbeing must also be ensured. Careful consideration and planning is needed.

1.2 Policy Objectives

The purpose of this document is to set out the requirements to be satisfied for a dog to be in school for educational/therapy purposes. It also provides some basic advice in respect of other dogs on school grounds.

1.3 Policy Application

This policy applies to all States-maintained schools (including voluntary schools) in Guernsey and Alderney. Throughout this policy directive, 'Headteacher' also refers to Heads of Service and Principals, and 'school' refers to any education establishment.

1.4 Accountabilities

Headteachers are accountable for the implementation of this policy in their school.

1.5 Linked Documents

[Vetting Requirements in Education policy](#)

[Accidents and Near-Miss Incident Reporting](#)

[Critical Incidents](#)

[External Providers, Businesses and PSHCE Support Agencies Working within Educational Establishments](#)

[Medicines in Schools and Supporting Learners with Medical Needs](#)

2.0 Definitions

Handler – This is the person who has trained and been assessed with the dog and will accompany it while at school. They are responsible for the dog's behaviour, condition, cleanliness and welfare while it is acting as a therapy dog.

There are two³ types of dog that may ordinarily work within schools for educational purposes, providing therapeutic interactions:

² See Section 7.0 for examples

³ A further type of dog – an 'Individual school therapy dog' – is discussed in section 6.3

Visiting dogs – These are dogs that are invited into schools for specific educational/therapy purposes, typically spending a maximum of two hours working at a time. Example tasks could be: To encourage reluctant readers; comfort and stroking sessions for anxiety, depression, ADHD, etc.; individual intervention programmes to teach empathy and responsibility, educational displays (dog safety/behaviour), etc.

School therapy dogs – These are dogs that spend considerable time within an individual school, potentially based there full time, performing many tasks which assist learning: Enhancing focus levels; promoting quiet, calm, kindness; providing positive greetings; helping with relationship building; opening communication channels; supporting learners with high anxiety to cope with situations. They are also mechanisms for teaching behaviour control and reasoning, giving learners a chance to take supervised control in a positive manner.

3.0 Requirements

The presence and activity of any dog on school premises for educational/therapy purposes must have been agreed by the Headteacher, having been considered against the requirements set out below. Such a dog is exempted from the requirement to be excluded from the playgrounds of States-maintained schools⁴.

The Headteacher should ensure appropriate records are kept to demonstrate that the requirements have been worked through and satisfied. Relevant dates (for example renewal dates for insurance certificates, training re-assessments and vet checks, annual review of risk assessments) should be noted and followed up at the appropriate time to ensure continued compliance.

These requirements have been written with, and are endorsed by, the States Veterinary Officer (SVO).

⁴ The Control of Dogs Ordinance (1992) requires that dogs are excluded from the playgrounds of all States-maintained schools in Guernsey (aside from registered assistance dogs and Police/Customs dogs). However, an exemption licence is in place such that dogs invited onto a school site for educational purposes are permitted in the children's play areas of States' schools, as well as Education playing fields. The current exemption is valid until 7 October 2028. The relevant legislation in Alderney - the Control of Dogs (Alderney) Ordinance, 2002 - does not contain equivalent prohibitions/controls; however, Education policy is to mirror the above-noted (legal) exclusions/controls that exist in Guernsey, in operational policy for St Anne's school in Alderney (including the same above-noted exemptions) (see [section 6.1](#)).

3.1 Clarity of Objectives and Impact on School Operations

Headteachers should be clear about the educational objectives for having a therapy dog in school. The proposed activities and duration of visits should be compatible with those objectives and not adversely impact school operations.

3.2 Suitability of the Dog and Handler

3.2.1 Training, Temperament and Condition

Dogs must be able to be relied upon to behave impeccably around learners and must themselves be subject to a high standard of care to ensure any risks of illness or injury to learners are minimised. To work in a States-maintained school:

- Headteachers must receive proof that the dog has been assessed, in partnership with the Handler who will accompany them in school, as suitable to undertake the proposed type/level of therapy dog work in schools. Assessment must have been undertaken by an organisation that has been endorsed by the SVO as ‘appropriate’ for training/assessing dogs to be present in schools for educational purposes. Annual reassessment is necessary if the dog is to continue working in schools. [Appendix 1](#) provides guidance on assessment and details those local organisations currently accepted as ‘appropriate’ by the SVO⁵.
- Headteachers must receive proof that the dog is an adult⁶, has been vet-checked and deemed fit to work by a registered veterinarian (checks to be repeated annually). Dogs must fulfil the condition criteria set out in [Appendix 2](#).

[**Note:** [Section 6.2](#) sets out limited exceptions to the above for dogs ‘in training’ with an Appropriate Organisation to become therapy dogs.]

3.2.2 DBS / Supervision

Headteachers must be satisfied that staff or volunteers working in schools with a therapy dog have DBS clearance appropriate to what they are doing, in accordance with the ‘Vetting Requirements in Education’ and ‘External Providers, Businesses and PSHCE Support Agencies’⁷ policies.

Unless the dog handler is a qualified teacher or LSA within the school, any educational therapy interactions must be supervised by such a person.

⁵ This appendix will be updated: In light of changing knowledge and experience regarding dog behaviour and welfare / As and when the ‘appropriate’ provider list is revised

⁶ Not a puppy or adolescent. The age for these stages varies between dog breeds, but a guideline minimum acceptable age is 12 months

⁷ An agency providing dogs as therapy within a school would be considered to be an External Provider

3.3 Insurance

The Headteacher must be satisfied, in advance, that the presence of any dog in school for educational/therapy purposes will be covered by suitable insurance:

- **Members of staff** who are employees of the States of Guernsey working in a teaching or support role in school and who have a dog that is trained to the required level to be present as a therapy dog in schools, are acknowledged to be acting in their employed capacity. They must, however, assume all of the responsibilities of a Handler with regard to the care and safety of learners and the dog. (Please note that States' insurance cover does **not** extend to circumstances where the dog is still 'in training' – see section 6.2)
- **Any other person** who visits a school with a dog for educational purposes must carry a minimum of £5 million public liability insurance or equivalent insurance (for example, through the organisation the Handler and the dog are representing). Evidence of such insurance must be provided to the Headteacher.

3.4 Risk Assessment and Safety Procedures

Headteachers must ensure that any proposal for a dog to be present in school for educational/therapy purposes is subject to risk assessment, and any identified controls put in place⁸. [Appendix 3](#) provides a template that can be tailored to the individual situation. The assessment should be reviewed annually and at any time circumstances change or an accident/near-miss incident occurs.

Risk assessment must take account of any known instances of cynophobia (fear of dogs) and dog allergy in the school population. The presence of such conditions does not necessarily mean a dog cannot come into school, but that appropriate controls must be implemented. The School Nurse is a source of advice.

The Headteacher must work with appropriate personnel to revise emergency and safety procedures, as required, to include the dog.

3.4.1 Cynophobia - a Fear of Dogs

Some people (both children and adults) have a fear of dogs. If a learner or member of staff has cynophobia, care has to be taken to neither unnecessarily exclude them nor try to 'cure' them. (Treatment of phobias requires great skill and training.)

3.4.2 Allergies to Dogs

If it is known that a learner or member of staff is allergic to dogs then it may be inappropriate to have a dog in, for example, a particular classroom or area, depending on the severity of the allergic response. Similarly it may only become apparent after a couple of

⁸ The H&S team is available to assist with queries. CLEAPPSS is another useful source of advice.

visits that a learner or member of staff is allergic to dogs. It is important to prepare for this eventuality without having to resort to excluding the allergy sufferer or expecting them to take medication to manage the allergy.

Steps can be taken by schools and the Handler to minimise the risks of allergies, including ensuring that dogs are groomed regularly and bathed as required, that windows are open if possible and that the learning environment is vacuumed thoroughly.

3.5 Communication

Headteachers must ensure that:

- Members of the school community:
 - Teaching, and non-teaching support staff (including admin staff, premises staff and School Nurse, etc.)
 - Learners
 - Parents/carers

are made aware of the intention for a dog to come into school for educational/therapy purposes. Communication should be appropriate to the group involved (e.g. staff meeting, presentation, electronic communication, letters home etc.). [Appendix 4](#) suggests example content for a general communication to parents/carers. Where specific learners have been identified for particular/extensive interaction with the dog, their parents/carers should be aware of what is involved.

There must be the opportunity to raise queries / notify of concerns (e.g. medical matters and cultural sensitivities) so issues can inform risk assessments and controls. If any concerns raised by individual parents/carers cannot be allayed to their satisfaction, there should be an ability to 'opt-out'.

- Educational/information sessions are run for learners, as appropriate, to explain how to behave around dogs, etc⁹. This might be of particular benefit for younger learners, but should be undertaken wherever a school considers it would be sensible.
- Courtesy notifications are provided to other known parties (such as contractors) that regularly work in school and might encounter the dog / be exposed to dog-derived allergens.

⁹ Ideally this would be something that the dog organisation involved could assist with. Other resources include 'The Blue Dog' (<https://www.thebluedog.org/en/>), etc.

3.6 Handler Awareness of Responsibilities

The Headteacher must ensure the Handler is aware of their responsibilities:

- To undertake annual therapy dog reassessment and vet checks, and keep all vaccinations and preventative treatments for parasites up to date. If topical applications are used then these must be applied at least five days before a visit. (All financial costs are the sole responsibility of the Handler.)
- For all aspects of the dog's care and welfare while on school premises. This includes provision of water (this must be available at all times), food, toilet breaks and disposal of waste. The dog must only toilet in an agreed outdoor location - dog faeces must be cleared immediately and disposed of in a way agreed with school staff (it is acceptable to place bagged dog faeces in black bin bags). The Handler must also arrange for a safe, secure place that the dog can use when required (rest break of 10 minutes for every hour worked and at any other point it is needed)
- To have the dog on a lead at all times on school grounds. (This may not be necessary for 'School' dogs that spend a significant amount of time working in school; however, this must be subject to risk assessment.)
- To be with the dog at all times; when this is not possible, arrangements must be made where the dog is kennelled (or equivalent), away from learners and staff
- To display the identity of the 'appropriate' organisation that has assessed them (e.g. on the equipment that the dog is wearing)
- To provide the school with signage (to alert visitors to the dog's presence)
- To receive, and comply with, induction training relevant to their role, including procedures to follow when arriving at/leaving site, and in relation to activity sessions/any other interaction with learners
- To refrain from taking the dog into school if it is ill, dirty/poorly groomed, has excessively long or sharp claws or, in the case of a female dog, is in season or in the last third of pregnancy, or nursing puppies
- To remind learners of how to behave around dogs; not to eat or drink around dogs, to avoid hand to mouth contact when around dogs and to wash hands with soap and water after interacting with the dog etc., as may be appropriate

3.7 Supervising Staff Member Awareness of Responsibilities

The Headteacher must ensure that the teacher/LSA overseeing the therapy activity is aware:

- To raise any concerns about the activity/dog/Handler, including if they feel the activity does not achieve the intended objective or negatively impacts operations
- To also remind learners of behaviour and hygiene measures, as appropriate

3.8 Preparation of a School Procedure

If a proposal to use dogs as therapy in schools is agreed, the Headteacher must ensure the existence of an appropriate Procedure document to set out what happens in their individual school. All school staff and the Handler must be familiar with this document.

4.0 Incidents

In the unlikely event of an accident or near-miss incident involving a therapy dog, the [Accidents and Near-Miss Incident Reporting](#) procedure should be followed.

The [Critical Incident](#) policy should be referred to if the incident is likely to cause:

- Immediate or delayed emotional reactions in a number of staff, learners and parents/carers surpassing their normal coping mechanisms and/or
- Serious disruption to the running of the school and/or
- Significant public/news media attention to the school

5.0 Removal of a Therapy Dog from School

The Headteacher may limit, remove or exclude from school property any dog if it poses a direct threat to the health or safety of the school community, causes a significant disruption of school activities or otherwise jeopardizes the safe operation of the school or a school event. Examples of such include, but are not limited to, if the dog:

- Shows aggression towards people or other animals
- Is not under the full control of the Handler
- Is unable to perform reliably the service for which it has been approved
- Urinates or defecates in inappropriate locations
- Vocalises unnecessarily, (i.e., barking, growling or whining)
- Inappropriately solicits attention, visits or annoys any learners or members of staff
- Solicits or steals food or other items from a learner or member of staff
- If a female dog, is in season, pregnant or nursing
- Is infested with parasites
- Is unwell (such as diarrhoea/vomiting, communicable disease of the skin, mouth or eyes, etc.)
- Is dirty/poorly groomed or has excessively long or sharp claws

6.0 Other Dogs on School Grounds

6.1 Pet Dogs

The 1992 Control of Dogs Ordinance requires that dogs¹⁰ are excluded from the playgrounds of States-maintained schools in Guernsey, and further that dogs are only allowed on States-

¹⁰ Aside from registered assistance dogs and Police/Customs dogs

owned playing fields if they are on a lead and under close supervision. It is Education's policy that the same exclusion/controls should apply on an operational basis at St Anne's School in Alderney. Where a pet dog is in contravention of the exclusion/controls, the Headteacher/staff should act to ensure the person involved is made aware of the problem (for example, if a pet dog is brought into the playground by a parent/carer collecting a child from school, they should be asked to remove the dog and to refrain from bringing it on future occasions).

6.2 Dogs 'In Training' with an Appropriate Organisation to Become Therapy Dogs

A school may receive a request to admit a dog that is not yet an adult or which has not yet passed the level of assessment that qualifies it to undertake the therapy work ultimately intended. Such requests may be received in the interests of gradually introducing and acclimatising a dog to the school environment. This is likely to be particularly the case for dogs that are intended to ultimately act as full-time school dogs. For the Headteacher to give approval for such visits:

- The Appropriate Organisation with which the dog is in training must confirm that, in the professional opinion of its staff, the dog/Handler pair is suitable and safe to be in a school environment for the intended periods, and visits must be planned in conjunction with the Organisation
- All other requirements set out in Section 3 of this policy (including all other condition requirements) must be satisfied. In such 'dog-in-training' circumstances, the Handler must carry relevant insurance (see Section 3.3 for levels), for example, through the organisation that is training the dog; the States' insurance cover will not apply, even if the Handler is a member of school staff

If it is intended that there be interaction with children during training visits, this must be included in the risk assessment and should be limited (i.e. the dog should not undertake the full intended therapy work until after it has passed its final assessment/become an adult, depending on which factor(s) was/were not originally satisfied.)

6.3 Assistance Dogs and 'Individual School Therapy Dogs'

- **Assistance dogs** are dogs that have been specifically trained to assist a disabled person (well-known examples being Guides dogs, Hearing dogs, Canine Generated Independence dogs). Such dogs should have been granted certification through an Recognised Assistance Dog (RAD) training organisation, based on high standards of training, behaviour, health and welfare, and carry formal identification.

(Recognised Assistance Dogs meet or exceed the minimum training standards of the International Association of Assistance Dog Partners (IAADP) and may be issued with

a permit by the Office *of the* Committee *for the* Environment & Infrastructure (E&I). Such dogs are exempt from the 1992 Control of Dogs Ordinance and allowed to enter school playgrounds.)

- An **Individual School therapy dog** is a dog that is owned/handled by a learner and works with them at school, giving support specific to the learner's needs. This type of dog may work to help with anxiety, depression and anger, as well as disorders like ADHD and Autism. Such a dog must be trained/assessed to a level similar to that of a 'School' therapy dog.

It is likely that both of these types of dogs will be a rarity in schools. It is recommended that, should a school receive a request for an Individual School Therapy dog or Assistance Dog to accompany a learner or member of staff on school premises, they refer to the SVO for advice. (In principle, the elements for a school to consider will be similar to those for the visiting and school therapy dogs set out in this document. In addition, the need for the dog's presence to support the individual at school must be demonstrated medically and, where so proven, it must be demonstrated that the dog meets high standards appropriate to its role.)

7.0 Relevant Research

- Kate R. Beck (2015) "The Impact of Canine-Assisted Therapy and Activities on Children in an Education Setting" (St. John Fisher College)
- Lori Friesen (2009) "Exploring Animal Assisted Programs with Children in school and therapeutic contexts" (Early Childhood Education)
- Sophie Susannah Hall, Nancy R. Gee, Daniel Simon Mills (2016) "Children Reading to Dogs: A systematic Review of Literature" (PLOS one)
- Olga Solomon (2010) "What a Dog Can Do: Children with Autism and Therapy Dogs in Social Interaction" (Psychological Anthropology)

Appendix 1: Assessment of Training and Temperament and List of ‘Appropriate’ Organisations

As set out in Section 3.2.1, dogs must be assessed as suitable for the proposed work in schools, considering the type of activities and the time they would spend in school. Assessment must be by an organisation that has been endorsed by the SVO as ‘appropriate’ for training/assessing dogs to be present in schools for educational purposes.

‘Appropriate’ Organisations

Whilst there may be other parties that have the potential to train/assess dogs/Handlers to a suitable standard to be present for educational purposes in local schools, those that have currently sought to become an ‘appropriate’ provider under this policy and been approved by the SVO, are as follows:

- **Paws for Support (PFS):**
 - For ‘Visiting’ school therapy dogs (in school for short periods of time): PFS Level 2 training and assessment
 - For ‘School’ therapy dogs (full time or present for a significant proportion of the school day): PFS Level 4 training and assessment
- **Welfare Animals Guernsey (WAG):**
 - For ‘Visiting’ school therapy dogs (in school for short periods of time, in a non-training, non-familiarisation, non-assessment situation): WAG Level 5 assessment

Other organisations who would wish to be considered for this list should contact the SVO.

The organisation would need to set out such elements as:

- The qualifications and experience of personnel undertaking training/assessments, including membership of professional bodies, etc.
- Summary of training requirements (and any other requirements)
- Summary of assessment framework (at initial assessment, at periodic requalification, etc.)

Each case would be considered on its merits, with the overwhelming criterion being that the scheme must be considered by the SVO to be suitable to minimise potential risks to learners and staff in schools.

Minimum Criteria¹¹:

- The dog and Handler pair should have undergone training relevant to preparing them for the high standards of behaviour and types of interactions expected in the proposed therapy work
- The dog must be assessed with the Handler that will accompany it in school
- Assessors must be qualified in respect of dog training/behaviour (relevant qualifications and experience)
- The assessing organisation's judgement of the dog/Handler pair:
 - Should not be based on a single occasion. (If 'final assessment' is undertaken on a single occasion, the organisation's assessors should have had prior experience of the dog/Handler working as a pair, for example in a training context, so they can have confidence in the dog and Handler partnership over an extended period and in various situations.)
 - Should not be based on the view of a single assessor (consensus view of two or more people)
- Reassessment must be undertaken annually
- Assessment must confirm that:
 - The dog is toilet trained
 - The dog responds to Handler commands, even when there are distractions present
 - The dog has a calm temperament, with no barking, aggressive or sexual behaviour, jumping up on people/furniture, begging, excessive sniffing or hunting behaviours
 - The dog is calm and comfortable:
 - When walking with the Handler
 - Meeting people, including children of a range of ages, sitting and moving
 - When being touched and stroked by other people (including children)
 - Working around other dogs
 - When away from the Handler (e.g. in a crate or other safe space)
 - The Handler is confident in handling the dog
 - The Handler has extensive knowledge of dog socialisation, dog training, the intended therapy dog work, equipment requirements, dog behaviour (e.g. barking) and safe working practise when dogs and children are interacting
 - The Handler is able to recognise the signs of stress and arousal in the dog (and other dogs) and knows what to do if this occurs

¹¹ Whilst the general areas of assessment will be similar, higher standards will be expected for dogs proposed as 'School' therapy dogs than those wishing to qualify as 'Visiting' dogs.

Appendix 2 Dog Condition

- Dogs must be adults; not puppies or adolescents [see [section 6.2](#) for limited exceptions for dogs 'in training' with an Appropriate Organisation to become therapy dogs]
- Dogs must be taxed and bear identification details of the owner, as required by Guernsey law
- Dogs must be microchipped
- Dogs must be vet-checked annually and be deemed fit to work by a registered vet. This must be evidenced by a document signed by the dog's veterinarian
- Dogs must have up to date vaccinations, or have titer test results showing they have adequate immunity. In addition to other vaccinations, dogs must be vaccinated against two variants of Leptospirosis: *L. interrogans* serovar canicola and *L. interrogans* serovar icterohaemorrhagiae. These variants are included in 'Lepto 2' vaccinations
- Dogs must receive anti-round worms treatments monthly
- Dogs must be subject to regular effective treatment to control external parasites (including fleas and ticks). If topical applications are used then these must be applied at least five days before a visit.
- Dogs' nails, including dew claws, must not be excessively long or sharp
- Dogs must be clean, tidy and well-groomed (no dirt, fur mats or vegetation in their coat)
- Dogs must not undertake a visit if they have shown any signs of illness within the previous 48 hours (including vomiting and/or diarrhoea, or communicable disease of the skin, mouth or eyes)
- Female dogs must not work as therapy dogs in schools when they are in season, in the last third of pregnancy or nursing



Appendix 3 Risk Assessment for Dogs as Therapy in Schools

School/Service		Period covered	
Date of Assessment		Completed by	
Educational objectives and generic benefits			

General assumptions

- The Headteacher has approved the presence of a therapy dog in school and will authorise a completed risk assessment before a visit of a therapy dog (along with observing all other requirements set out in the ‘Dogs as Therapy in Schools’ policy);
- In Guernsey, there is an Exemption Licence in place under the Control of Dogs Ordinance, 1992, enabling dogs on States-maintained school sites for educational purposes¹²; and
- Informed parent/carer consent will be in place (on at least an ‘opt-out’ basis)

(Please adapt the table below to suit the circumstances. Add/remove/amend the template content as appropriate)

Hazard	Who might be harmed	Control measures in place	Further action required to control risk
Learners or staff encounter a dog in school unexpectedly / without parent/carer knowledge/consent	Learner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School population notified that a dog will be present in school, giving opportunity to notify of any issues that will need managing (phobias, allergies, etc), and/or ‘opt out’ 	
Movement of the dog around school	Potentially all learners, staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners informed about how to greet a dog around the school. 	Responsible teacher/LSA to supervise all dog contact and take appropriate action if

¹² The current Exemption Licence is valid until 7 October 2028

DOGS AS THERAPY IN SCHOOLS

	and visitors to the building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog kept on a lead when moving around the school. • Visitors moving around the school site should be notified of the presence of a therapy dog by signage etc (for example provided by the organisation that has assessed the dog) 	required, e.g. removal of the dog from the area to a safe space (for example, dog crate).
Learners' behaviour	Learners, dog	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zero tolerance of anyone who attempts to hurt or provoke the dog in any way. • Learners should be given the chance to remove themselves from the situation. • Learners will be taught how to greet and approach the dog 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff will proactively look for any sign of deteriorating behaviour. • Responsible teacher will supervise all dog contact and take appropriate action if required, e.g. removal of dog from area to a safe space (for example, dog crate).
Dog's behaviour	All participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only appropriately trained/assessed dogs will be allowed into schools (as defined in the Policy) • Dog treats will be used to reward and reinforce good behaviour. 	Responsible person (the Handler) to monitor for changes in the dog's behaviour and take appropriate action if required, e.g. removal of dog from area to a safe space (for example, dog crate).
Hygiene issues from dogs	All participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only appropriately vaccinated, wormed, flea protected and groomed dogs will be allowed in schools, in accordance with the policy • Learners to thoroughly wash hands with soap and water after touching a dog. 	Responsible person (the Handler) to supervise all dog contact and ensure that learners wash their hands.
Toilet hygiene	All participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only appropriately toilet trained dogs will be allowed into schools (as defined in the Policy) • The dog will be encouraged to toilet outside of the school grounds in a designated area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there is a toileting accident, this will be cleaned up immediately with appropriate cleaners and the dog will be removed from school and checked for any illness • Toilet waste disposed of appropriately.

DOGS AS THERAPY IN SCHOOLS

Damage to school building, e.g. fixtures, fittings, etc. by chewing or scratching	School building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The dog will be supervised by the Handler at all times, or be in a safe space /crate and unable to cause damage. 	
Fear of a dog harming a student Animal bites, scratches, animal parasites or injuries	All participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The dog should be under the control of the Handler at all times Learner behaviour monitored at all times Dog vaccinations, worming and flea treatment must be kept up to date in accordance with the Policy, and record of those vaccinations kept and available for viewing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate treatment sought First aid kit available Parents/carers informed Accident or near-miss recorded appropriately.
Allergies to dogs	All participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those with known allergies to be highlighted and necessary precautions taken to minimise the risk of allergy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To discuss management of allergies/potential allergies with the School Nursing Service, if required. To discuss with parents/carers and agree precautions/ actions in advance.
Well-being of the dog	Dog	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The dog is to be given space and put in their safe space/crate if it shows signs of becoming stressed. The Handler to look for signs in the dog. Action to be taken in respect of any negative contact with the dog, such as taking to the vets, if necessary. Water to be made available to the dog at all times. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All incidents noted. For every one hour of interaction, the dog is to be given 10 minutes rest in their safe space/crate. Opportunity for toileting to be provided to the dog every three hours.

Appendix 4 Sample Communication ¹³ to Parents

The below is suggested content that could be used in a general communication to parents/carers. Schools are welcome to use this and amend content according to need. (If a learner has been identified for specific interaction, this should be made known to their parents/carers.)

Dear

I am writing to inform you that we will be having a [visiting therapy dog / school therapy dog] starting to attend school. Therapy work using dogs in school environments has been widely researched and proved to have a range of benefits for learners, such as supporting learners to become more confident readers, and reducing stress and anxiety.

Therapy dogs used in States of Guernsey schools must have impeccable temperaments; have undergone training, and have been carefully assessed to confirm that they are suitable to work in the school environment. The dogs are required to undergo annual re-assessments to make sure high standards are maintained. The dogs must also have an annual vet check and vaccinations, regular flea and worm treatments and be subject to high standards of grooming.

The dog that will be helping at our school is called [dog's name], and has been trained/assessed by [organisation name/description - local charity, etc.]. [Dog's name] will be starting in school in/on [date] to [briefly outline activities]. At the beginning, [dog's name] will be learning [her/his] role with short visits, which will gradually increase. When in school [dog's name] will remain on lead and with [his/her] Handler, [Handler name], at all times. [Dog's name] will be clearly identified with a [harness/cape or lead slip] displaying the [assessing organisation's name] logo. [Dog's name] will also always have a safe space in [state location] where [her/his] crate will be kept.

If you would like any further information or have any questions please contact [named person] by email [email address] or [school phone number]. If you know your child has any issues with dogs that you think might be relevant, please also let us know.

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely/faithfully

(Headteacher)

¹³ Letters should be set out as per guidance in the [Communications Manual on the Bridge](#)