



Dog in School Risk Assessment

The value of having an animal in school is becoming widely recognised as having a positive impact on people's well-being. Studies have shown that the presence of companion animals can lower rates of anxiety creating calmer states of mind. This applies to staff as well as to children.

Since Jane Stokes became mental health lead for children at Reigate School there have been discussions about welcoming a dog to site. In 2019 Jane Stokes got her dog Brac, a Welsh Terrier, known for their love of all people and a breed that has a coat which creates very little dander to the extent that it is described as hypo-allergenic.

Brac started coming to school as a 'dog in school' for one day a week in January 2021 and from September 2021 attended two days a week with visits to tutor groups, walking around school and being a presence in some areas during the school day with Mrs Stokes.

It is accepted that interacting with animals is not appropriate for all children but for some it has the potential to provide many positive benefits. The longer-term aim is to provide opportunities for children to have some time with Brac where they will interact through reading to him, a practice that is growing in popularity in many schools.

The risk assessment below is a working document and will be checked by key staff annually (or more regularly where appropriate).

Health & Safety Risk Assessment Record

Applicable to: The Whole School			→ Specify: Dog in school: Brac (belonging to J. Stokes)		
Assessment Date: September 2023		Lead Assessor:		Persons consulted:	
Review Date: July 2024		Further Action Required? (circle)	Yes	No	Matt Alexander Governors Greensand MAT

Process/Activity	Hazards Identified	Persons at Significant Risk	Existing Controls	Are existing controls adequate? Y/N	What additional controls are required?
Hygiene	Handling the animal	Staff and children	Establish procedures to ensure children and staff understand good hygiene habits around animals such as washing hands. After handling the dog, make sure all who have had contact wash their hands and any areas licked (note: Brac does not usually lick).	Yes	Brac to be accompanied at all times when walking around school premises.
Hygiene	Dog mess in playground / on school site	Staff and children	Brac to be taken for a walk before coming to site to minimise need to excrete on site. Dog to be offered toileting on grass in car park away from children. The dog will require a walk during the school day. Any mess to be appropriately cleaned away; faeces in hazardous waste bin.	Yes	Dog-poo bags to be in constant supply.
Hygiene	Parasites	Staff and children	Dog will be vaccinated, wormed and flea protected in accordance with the vet's recommendation. Dog checked over regularly for parasites. The dog will be kept clean and well groomed. The dog's bedding will be regularly washed.	Yes	N/A
Hygiene	Contact with dog sick	Staff and children	If Brac is unwell, he will not visit the school. If Brac is sick in school, the sick will be cleared up with paper towels, vomit absorber and disinfectant; gloves will be worn.	Yes	N/A
Allergy/ asthmatic reaction	Allergic reaction	Staff and children	Brac has a coat that produces very little dander which reduces the risk of allergic reaction. All parents will be notified about the school dog and given the	Yes	N/A

			<p>opportunity to advise the school of their child's allergies to or known fear of dogs.</p> <p>A list of any children/staff who should not interact with the dog will be kept on the school system.</p> <p>Children/staff with allergies will be able to opt out of situations of interaction with the dog.</p> <p>Dog bedding regularly washed.</p> <p>Good hygiene routines and hand washing to be followed by all who come in contact with the dog see above.</p> <p>Brac will be in school twice a week.</p> <p>Attendance in school to be recorded on weekly notes (staff information bulletin).</p>		
Dog phobia	Anxiety caused by close proximity to dog- including those with religious beliefs that do not allow contact with dogs	Staff and children	<p>Parental consent form to be issued for children to have close contact with the dog where this is agreed.</p> <p>Visitors advised and the dog removed if necessary to a suitable alternative room.</p> <p>If an issue is pre-determined, the dog will not come into school that day.</p> <p>Brac is well-trained and well-socialised with people of all ages.</p>	Yes	Where there is an identified phobia/anxiety the dog is not banned from coming to school but every effort is made to segregate the dog from the people with phobias/ anxiety.
Scratched	Dog over excited in play or jumping up.	Staff and children	<p>Brac will be accompanied in public spaces by an adult that knows him well. He will not be allowed to roam around the school alone.</p> <p>Brac is well-trained and well-socialised with people of all ages.</p> <p>Brac has attended and graduated from puppy training classes.</p> <p>Children will not be left unsupervised with the dog.</p> <p>Staff and children will be taught how to approach the dog safely.</p> <p>Children to only touch the dog when he is stood or sat still.</p> <p>Children and staff will be instructed not to feed Brac.</p> <p>Mrs Stokes will have Brac-specific treats that will be used as appropriately in the day.</p> <p>Children to be taught the rules of safe animal interaction.</p> <p>Rules to be reinforced by all staff.</p> <p>Brac's claws will be kept trimmed.</p> <p>Dog will be kept on the lead whilst walking around the school grounds.</p>	Yes	Brac will be supervised at all times he is in contact with children and staff. Handler to be sensitive and vigilant to the children's and dog's responses around each other.

Dog bite	Dog bites someone	Staff and children	<p>Handlers are trained in working with children and are familiar with Brac.</p> <p>Children are warned of the hazards of animals, e.g. not tormenting the dog, not approaching a sleeping dog, recognising signs Brac is not happy.</p> <p>Children taught how to approach Brac safely.</p> <p>Children to be taught the rules of safe animal interaction.</p> <p>Rules to be reinforced by all staff.</p> <p>Mrs Stokes to regularly monitor the dog's temperament, behaviour and mood.</p> <p>Mrs Stokes to supervise the dog and keep him on a lead when moving around the school.</p> <p>Children taught where to appropriately touch Brac.</p> <p>Handler or member of staff to say 'no' firmly if mouth contact looks likely or if a change in mood is detected in Brac.</p> <p>Brac to be removed if any mouth contact looks likely.</p>		
Financial cost	Cost of feeding etc.		The dog is owned by and is the responsibility of Mrs Stokes who will pay for his upkeep.		
Financial cost	Claim is made against the school about the dog.		<p>Note that Brac has third party liability insurance through membership of the Dog's Trust.</p> <p>If he is to 'work' with the children school insurance will cover any claim.</p>		
Animal Welfare	Negative behaviour caused by stress, bites or scratches	The dog, staff and children	<p>Ensure Brac has time away from the children in his crate undisturbed. The crate is the right size for him to be happy and safe.</p> <p>Ensure Brac has time in a quiet space without any children.</p> <p>Ensure Brac only interacts with the children in short bursts and is not crowded by children/adults (although he enjoys all attention).</p> <p>Ensure Brac is not in school full time.</p>		N/A

Approved by Governors: _____

Date: September 2023

Approved by Headteacher: M Alexander