

## GENERAL SCHOOLS RISK ASSESSMENT



### PART A. ASSESSMENT DETAILS:

**Area/task/activity:** Therapy Dog in School

**Location of activity:** Library, Classrooms, School, based in HT/Leadership office      **School –** Brunshaw Primary School, Morse Street, Burnley, BB10 4PB

<b>School name:</b> <b>Address &amp; Contact details:</b>	Brunshaw Primary School Morse Street Burnley BB10 4PB	<b>Name of Person(s) undertaking Assessment:</b>	Daryl Cooper
		<b>Signature(s):</b>	D.Cooper
<b>Headteacher (Name):</b>	Gina Smith	<b>Date of Assessment:</b>	April 2026
<b>Signature:</b>		<b>Planned Review Date:</b>	
<b>How communicated to staff:</b>	On the school website and at governors	<b>Date communicated to staff:</b>	

### PART B. HAZARD IDENTIFICATION AND CONTROL MEASURES:

List of significant hazards (something with the potential to cause harm)	Who might be harmed?	Type of harm	Existing controls (Actions already taken to control the risk)
General information	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers	All below	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Follow guidance issued by the RSPCA on the 'Therapy Dog Friendly Schools' to ensure compliance with the Therapy Dog Welfare Act and best practice. <a href="https://education.rspca.org.uk/education/teachers/animalfriendlyschools">https://education.rspca.org.uk/education/teachers/animalfriendlyschools</a></li> </ul>

<b>List of significant hazards</b> (something with the potential to cause harm)	<b>Who might be harmed?</b>	<b>Type of harm</b>	<b>Existing controls</b> (Actions already taken to control the risk)
Poor hygiene	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers	Infection, illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Cuts and abrasions on the exposed skin of hands and arms are to be covered before handling the Therapy Dog;</li> <li>◆ Pupils and adults must always wash their hands prior to handling the Therapy Dog and as soon as possible afterwards or after coming into contact with bedding, toys water bowl etc.</li> <li>◆ Reception &amp; KS1 pupils hand washing is to be supervised to ensure that it is done properly;</li> <li>◆ Reception &amp; KS1 pupils are to be closely supervised to ensure they do not put their fingers in their mouths before hands have been washed;</li> <li>◆ Areas the Therapy Dog visits will be cleaned and disinfected regularly after every visit;</li> <li>◆ Therapy dog will stand outside in a morning to greet the children (always on a lead and with a nominated staff member), stay in the leadership/head teacher's office, go out at playtimes, enter classrooms</li> <li>◆ In the unlikely event the Therapy Dog gets onto tables etc. clean and disinfect them immediately</li> <li>◆ Daryl Cooper will arrange to dispose of any uneaten dog food before it begins to decompose or attracts pests such as flies and vermin.</li> </ul>
Manual handling	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers, visitors, Therapy Dog	Physical injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Pupils and visitors are requested/instructed not to lift/carry the Therapy Dog as this could injure themselves or the Dog. Nominated members of staff supervise any interaction with the Therapy Dog.</li> </ul>
Slips, trips and falls	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers, visitors, Therapy Dog	Physical injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Good standards of housekeeping must be maintained at all times. The Therapy Dog is moved around the building on a short lead by approved students and/or staff to reduce the risk of anyone tripping over the Dog.</li> <li>◆ Pupils are supervised by a nominated person at all times when handling the therapy dog. All liquid and faeces are cleaned up immediately to reduce the risk of slips, trips and falls and also to reduce the risks from poor hygiene.</li> </ul>

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Diseases, parasites and allergies	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers	Illness, allergic reaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ A letter will be sent to parents and Carers to ask them to identify any pupils known to have allergic reactions to the Therapy Dog and these pupils are instructed and supervised to ensure they avoid all further contact with the Therapy Dog</li> <li>◆ Medical assistance will be sought where an allergic reaction does not subside after a reasonable timeframe, the Therapy Dog and the affected person will be kept apart</li> <li>◆ Dog food must be kept safe and secure to prevent unauthorised access and to keep away from pests</li> </ul>
Infection/ill health	Therapy Dog  Staff, Pupils and Visitors	Illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The Therapy Dog attends regular Veterinary appointments for general health checks including treatments for worming, flea control and required vaccinations. Information about these visits are kept in the Therapy Dogs personnel file held in head teacher's office.</li> <li>◆ Gina Smith (head teacher)/ Daryl Cooper (AHT) is responsible for ensuring all relevant documentation is up to date and available as required.</li> <li>◆ To reduce the risk of infection/bacteria spread when the dog has had a comfort break, the nominated adults will ensure that all faeces is safely disposed of using appropriate personal protective equipment and poop scoop/poop bags (tied and disposed of in an external bin). If the exercise area is a hard surface e.g. tarmac or concrete, this must be washed down regularly to prevent Staff, Pupils and Visitors coming into contact with harmful bacteria etc.</li> <li>◆ If the Therapy dog is ill in school, it will be taken home/to the vets as necessary.</li> <li>◆ If the Therapy dog is ill away from school it will be kept out of school until it has returned to full health.</li> </ul>
Therapy dog eating food in school	Therapy Dog	Physical injury/upset stomach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The Therapy dog must only eat its own food and treats and must not be fed by pupils without authority from and under the supervision of approved members of staff and in agreement with the AUP signed by staff and pupils.</li> <li>◆ To prevent accidental feeding, The Therapy Dog will not enter the staff room or the main school dining hall whilst food is being prepared/served/consumed. All food should be kept out of the Therapy Dog's reach e.g. in a store cupboard off the floor.</li> </ul>

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Therapy Dog behaviour	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers	Bites, scratches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Pupils are warned of the general hazards and risks posed by some Dogs</li> <li>◆ Procedures are introduced and pupils are taught the correct handling of the Therapy Dog</li> <li>◆ The Therapy Dog is closely supervised by an adult when in the presence of children</li> <li>◆ Pupils are closely supervised by an adult when in contact with the Therapy dog</li> <li>◆ A First Aid kit are available in classrooms. Any Therapy Dog scratches and bites must be carefully washed and a first aider contacted</li> <li>◆ In line with existing school procedures, all accidents/incidents will be reported and investigated</li> <li>◆ The Therapy Dog will have had training; puppy classes and approved therapy dog training (Lancashire Canine Academy)</li> <li>◆ A Notice is displayed in School Reception area informing when the Therapy Dog is on the Premises</li> <li>◆ All Pupils, staff and visitors are made aware of the rules of behaviour when interacting with the Therapy Dog</li> <li>◆ Daryl Cooper (nominated person) provide regular reminders about the dog's needs and what might make them worried/nervous/angry</li> <li>◆ All staff and pupils will sign and Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) agreeing to follow the guidance set out.</li> </ul>
Therapy Dog Welfare	Therapy Dog	General wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The Therapy Dog is exercised regularly by a nominated person or supervised pupil.</li> <li>◆ All gates must be kept closed/locked during exercise periods, regular checks of any fencing for breaches must be undertaken to ensure the dog cannot escape.</li> <li>◆ The Dog is taught to signal when it needs a comfort break or is taken out regularly to allow for comfort needs.</li> </ul>

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Therapy Dog Welfare	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers	Therapy Dog death Pupil upset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Any specific welfare conditions for the breed of dog have been considered prior to making the decision to allow a Therapy dog on site</li> <li>◆ Therapy Dogs have access to clean water throughout the day</li> <li>◆ Provision is made for the Therapy Dog's welfare out of school hours e.g. the Therapy dog lives with the Assistant Headteacher</li> <li>◆ The Therapy Dog has regular veterinary health checks, if it isn't feeling well, it will be removed from the school environment until it is feeling better or treated by a Vet.</li> <li>◆ The Therapy dog is given regular breaks away from interacting with pupils.</li> </ul>
Cleanliness	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers, visitors Therapy Dog	General wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Regular cleaning of all areas is carried out by Daryl Cooper/Site Supervisor/cleaners after the Therapy Dog has left</li> <li>◆ Workplace Inspections are undertaken on a regular basis by the Site Supervisor and nominated governor</li> <li>◆ Daryl Cooper (nominated person) ensures that the Therapy Dog is cleaned/groomed on a regular basis prior to coming into school</li> <li>◆ The Therapy Dog is kept in the Leadership/Headteacher's office when not interacting with staff/pupils.</li> <li>◆ Blankets/bedding and crate 'safe place', are cleaned on a daily/weekly/regular basis, all blankets and bedding are cleaned off site by Daryl Cooper (nominated person);</li> <li>◆ Windows can be opened to provide fresh circulating air;</li> <li>◆ Air fresheners are available if required;</li> </ul>
Fire/Emergency Situation	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers, visitors Therapy Dog	Physical Injury/Fatality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The Therapy Dog is accompanied at all times and will be taken to the Fire Assembly Point by Daryl Cooper (nominated person) as they evacuate themselves</li> </ul>

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Noise	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers Therapy Dog	Physical Injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Daryl Cooper (nominated person) to instruct anyone coming into contact with the Therapy Dog to keep noise levels low to avoid upsetting/startling the dog</li> <li>◆ Staff to monitor the behaviour of students and therapy dog, including noise levels</li> <li>◆ The Therapy Dog will be trained to tolerate some noise levels e.g. walking through the school playground during break times/lunch time</li> </ul>
Security of Premises	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers Therapy Dog	Physical Injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Controlled access, Safeguarding policy available</li> <li>◆ Staff to supervise pupils outside the building</li> <li>◆ The Therapy Dog is restrained on a lead at all times</li> <li>◆ Gates are kept locked, Visitors cars and delivery vans onto the car park e.g. permission to access school grounds is sought from the Headteacher;</li> </ul>
Visiting other Schools/Premises	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers, Therapy Dog	Physical injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Consent is received from the Headteacher/SLT before arranging any visit to another premise</li> <li>◆ Trained members of staff accompany and supervise the Therapy dog and pupils at all times</li> <li>◆ If the Therapy Dog needs to be transported, a suitable method is used e.g. strapped in with a safety device attached to seatbelt in the vehicle, provided by Daryl Cooper (AHT)</li> <li>◆ The Dog is fed/watered and encouraged to take a comfort break prior to travelling;</li> <li>◆ Confirm date and time of visit prior to the initial visit by the Dog, discussions between both parties are recommended;</li> <li>◆ Site is assessed to ensure suitability of a visit by the dog;</li> <li>◆ Pupil visit risk assessments to be undertaken/reviewed as necessary;</li> <li>◆ Parent/Pupil consent forms to be completed;</li> <li>◆ The Assistant Headteacher (nominated person) to reiterate responsibilities for the Dog's behaviour on other premises e.g. if another adult is with the dog they need to understand how to handle the dog what to do/and what not to do;</li> <li>◆ Comply with all premises procedures;</li> <li>◆ Signage to be displayed indicating "Therapy Dog on Premises" while the therapy dog is on site;</li> </ul>

**NOTE:** CLEAPSS have issued a number of guidance leaflets on keeping Therapy Dogs in school as well bringing pets, etc to school that schools may find useful in developing this risk assessment further

- L56 – Housing and Keeping Animals;

This general risk assessment will apply to this area/task/activity in most schools providing the control measures described are in operation and there are no further local significant hazards. If it does not fully apply and further control measures are required, please complete the Action Plan at Part C. if it fully applies please sign below.

I certify that the risk assessment above fully applies to the area/task/activity under assessment in .....  
(Name of school)

Signed:

Name:

Risk Assessor.

<b>PART C. ACTION PLAN Further action / controls required</b>						
<b>Hazard</b>	<b>Action required</b>	<b>Person(s) to undertake action?</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Projected time scale</b>	<b>Notes / comments</b>	<b>Date Completed</b>