

Dogs on School Sites - Health and Safety Guidance for NASUWT Representatives

The NASUWT is aware that a growing number of schools are utilising dogs, other than assistance/guide dogs, on site for a variety of purposes. This guidance purely looks at the health and safety implications of having dogs on site in schools, and is not intended to comment on the perceived educational or other value of having non-assistance dogs on site.

The presence of non-assistance dogs on site does raise a number of health and safety issues that should be considered by the employer/school management. These include ensuring:

- 1) The dog is suitable for the age range of pupils present. This will include that:
 - the dog is appropriately trained;
 - the dog is used to being in crowded environments; and
 - the dog is used to being around children of a particular age.
- 2) A clear protocol exists for how the dog should be utilised. This will include:
 - who is responsible for the dog (i.e. who the owner is);
 - what the purpose of the dog is;
 - what activities the dog can and cannot be used for; and
 - the age groups that the dog can be used with.
- 3) Staff are consulted in advance, especially in regard to phobias and allergies, and the health and safety of pupils, especially in regard to phobias and allergies, is considered. Procedures must be in place so that any individuals with cynophobia and/or an allergy to dogs do not have contact with the dog. In the case of allergies, it is likely that direct contact with the dog is not required, and areas that the dog has been in could trigger an allergic reaction. Contact with dogs can, in some people, trigger an asthma attack, which could be severe and/or life threatening (in these cases, it is highly inadvisable for a dog to be present on the premises). An individual risk assessment may be required.

- 4) A risk assessment for the dog and its activities are shared with all relevant staff. This should include the control measures to be put in place to ensure the safety of the individuals in the school, and the dog itself, as well as any specific activities the dog will be undertaking and procedures for sanitary accidents. The risk assessment should be consulted on and shared with all staff.
- 5) Appropriate insurance cover is in place.
- 6) The welfare needs of the dog are met. This should include where the dog rests, where its food and water are located, how the dog can access water, how it is exercised during the day and so on. There should also be procedures for if the dog becomes unwell during the day.
- 7) Clear procedures and responsibilities are in place for cleaning up after the dog. It must be remembered that dog faeces represent a severe risk to human health and must be cleaned up and handled accordingly. This is especially true for any 'accidents' – it should be remembered that parasitic infections, as well as gastrointestinal illnesses such as norovirus and salmonella, can be transmitted from dogs to humans, amongst other diseases.
- 8) A clear procedure is in place should there be an incident with a dog. This should include emergency procedures and reporting procedures (including to parents, should the incident involve a pupil). It should also include procedures should the dog be injured or require veterinary attention.

NASUWT Representatives should ensure that the above points are addressed to their satisfaction with school leaders.

The Dogs Trust has comprehensive guidance on the use of dogs in schools, which is available at: <https://www.learnwithdogstrust.org.uk/school-dogs/school%20dogs%20guide.pdf>.

If representatives have concerns around the use of a dog/(s) in their school, these should be raised with management. If an inadequate response from management is obtained, further advice should be obtained from your NASUWT Local Secretary or National Executive Member.