

HINGUAR PRIMARY SCHOOL & NURSERY

📍 New Garrison Road, Shoeburyness, Essex, SS3 9FE ☎ 01702 292 721

🌐 www.hinguar.secat.co.uk ✉ office@hinguar.secat.co.uk

Headteacher: Mrs Alison Waite

6th January 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

We are writing to let you know of some exciting news for Hinguar Primary School. From next week, we will be getting our first visit from a dog, called Scruff, who will be a regular attendee on a Tuesday morning at Hinguar Primary School. Scruff is 2.5 years old and is a Border Terrier and belongs to Mrs Waite. He is small, playful, very calm and loves lots of tummy tickles. Border Terriers are known for their mild temperament and gentle nature. Scruff will be coming into school for short sessions initially. Mrs. Waite will obviously be caring for Scruff in school and will be taking him for sessions with the children as he settles.

Prior to Milo, our first dog, visiting, in an assembly, we discussed with the children the rules and expectations and the benefits about having a dog in school. We also undertook a significant amount of research and are aware of many benefits to having a school dog including:

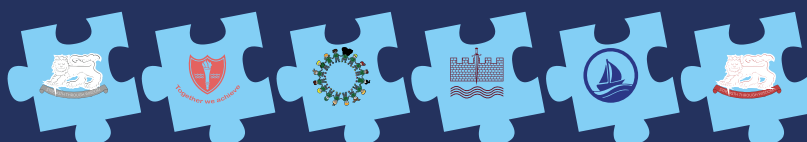
Benefits:

- a calming effect on pupils.
- improved behaviour and concentration, reduced stress and improved self-esteem.
- encouraging expression, participation and confidence for all children.
- fostering a sense of responsibility.
- motivating pupils to think and to learn, as most children have a high level of natural interest in, enthusiasm for and enjoyment of animals.
- encouraging respect and thereby improving pupils' relationships with each other, parents and teachers.
- teaching children to nurture and respect life.
- helping work undertaken with the most vulnerable children.
- helping children build confidence in reading.
- improving attendance.
- further promote our 'Well Being' agenda for pupils.

The dog's main place of residence will be in the downstairs office area, which is secure and separate from the classrooms. As Scruff is still only young, he will slowly be introduced to the school community, and we will begin by introducing him to small numbers of children. Over the year, all the children will have the opportunity to interact with Scruff as he begins to visit more classrooms and moves around the school more. Whilst moving around the school, Scruff will be kept on a short lead and will always be with an adult.

Please understand that we will do everything we can to reassure children who are fearful and that under no circumstances will they be forced to meet with the dog. All previous permissions for working with the school dog will continue to be adhered to.

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We will publish pictures of Scruff, via our social media, so that everyone can enjoy his development and our weekly newsletter will provide regular updates.

We hope the children will continue to gain a great deal of enjoyment from having a dog in school again and that he becomes an established part of life at Hinguar Primary School. However, should you have any queries or questions on the matter then please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Alison Waite

Mrs Attard

Headteacher

Deputy Headteacher

School Dog

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q Who is the legal owner of the dog and who pays for its costs?

A. The legal owner of the dog will be Mrs Waite who will care for the dog out of school hours and will bear the costs associated with it; the school budget will remain unaffected.

Q Will the dog be a distraction?

A. The dog will be kept in an office area. We will be careful to ensure that time spent with the school dog is shared among the children fairly. We will also ensure that children who are not involved in regular, direct contact with the dog are still able to participate in several ways, should they wish to do so.

Q Has a risk assessment been undertaken?

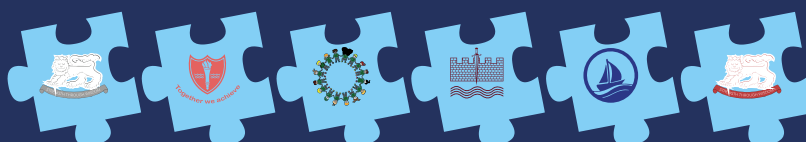
A. Yes, we have carefully considered having a dog in school and sought advice from many sources, including other schools that successfully have a dog on site. There is also a School Dog Policy available to view on the Website.

Q Who is responsible for training?

A. The nominated member of staff will be the legal owner of the dog and as a result, will be responsible for its training.

Q. How will the dog be toileted to ensure hygiene for all?

A. In the interest of health and hygiene our school dog will be toileted in a sectioned off area of the school site where children have no access. Thus, there will be no chance of the children encountering faeces. Our policy of no dogs in the playground/school is still applicable as we are unable to put effective control measures in place that guarantee temperament and safety when children come into unsupervised contact with unknown dogs.



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Q How will the dog's welfare be considered?

A. He will be walked in the mornings and come to school afterwards. The dog will be kept in an office area and will only have planned and supervised contact with children and visitors. The dog will be carefully trained over a period and will have unlimited access to water. We will work closely with other professionals to ensure the dog's welfare is always carefully considered.

Q How will this be managed where children have allergies?

A. We already manage a number of allergies at school, and this will be no different for children and adults that are allergic to dogs. Individual needs will always be met, and we are happy to work with parents to put additional control measures in place for individual allergies.

Q My child is frightened of dogs; how will you manage this?

A. Access to the dog is carefully managed and supervised and children do not need to have regular, close contact with it unless permission for this has been given. We hope to work closely with parents of children who are fearful of dogs to alleviate their fear and to teach them how to manage this.

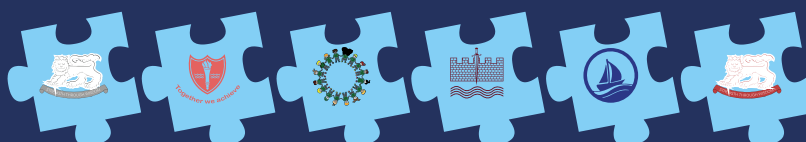
Policy on Dogs on School Grounds

Aims: To ensure the safety and well-being of pupils, staff and visitors to the school and to minimise the risk of accident or injury to people within the school grounds.

The context of the policy

Governors and staff recognise that dogs are an important part of life for some of our families and, as such, are often included in day-to-day activities such as walking children to and from school. In our teaching, we promote the relationship between people and their pets and accept and encourage the idea of pets as 'family members'. We do see pet ownership as a valuable educational experience for children.

The value of pet 'therapy' is widely accepted as a powerful aid to stimulation and communication. Studies have shown that the presence of companion animals can improve the well-being of children and lower the rate of anxiety, simply by making the environment happier, more enjoyable and less forbidding. The school also acknowledges the views of families who have chosen not to have dogs or other pets. They also recognise that bringing a dog onto the premises might pose a health and safety risk to our pupils and others on site and could be unsettling for many in school. The school recognises that even a well-behaved dog can behave unpredictably when placed in an unfamiliar, busy, noisy and crowded school environment and that this can lead to unexpected behaviour in even the best-behaved pet. Children can also behave unpredictably when in the presence of a dog especially where they are not used to being with them. It is in considering this context that this Code of Conduct has been drafted.





SECAT

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Code of Conduct

- The school dog must be on a lead that keeps the dog reasonably close to the adult who is control of it;
- No dogs accompanying children to and from school are allowed inside any school buildings or on the playground; only the school dog is allowed inside school buildings and on the playground;
- If any parent or pupil object to the animal's presence, then arrangements must be made to ensure that the dog is kept away from them. If necessary, the dog may need exclusion from specific areas;
- In any event, no dog is allowed in the enclosed Early Years play area at any time;
- The adult bringing the dog on site is responsible for cleaning up and removing from site any soiling by their dog on the school grounds and failure to do so will mean the dog will no longer be allowed in the school grounds (N.B. dog waste must not be put into the school bins);
- The school dog must be properly vaccinated and treated for fleas and other parasites, regularly groomed and checked for signs of infection or other illness;
- Claws should be kept trimmed to reduce the risk of scratches;
- Should the school dog fall ill, it will be diagnosed and treated by a vet and will not be allowed on the school premises until their health is restored. The school dog will have its coat cleaned regularly.
- It is understood that bringing a school dog to school is a privilege not a right and is done at the absolute discretion of the Headteacher.

January 2024

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