

Risk Assessment for School Dog

Risk Assessment for:	School Dog - Murray	
Establishment: Beccles Primary Academy	Assessment by: Iona Bennie	Date: September 2025
1st Review Date Due: End of Autumn 2025	Manager Approval: Clare Wells (Head Teacher) Reviewed - Tracey Driscoll (Chair of Governors)	Date: 3 rd September 2025 3 rd September 2025

Background:

The leadership team at Beccles Primary Academy carefully considered the idea of introducing a school dog to support children's wellbeing and learning. After thoughtful discussions and several weeks of research into the benefits and responsibilities involved, the decision was made to introduce Murray, a golden retriever owned by Miss Bennie (Class teacher). Murray was chosen not only because of his calm and gentle nature, but also because he came from a known and trusted source.

The decision to bring Murray into school was based on clear, research-backed reasons for having a school dog, including:

1. **To provide the academy with a pet** who can live as naturally as possible within the school setting, while being trained from a puppy to be calm, safe, and well-suited to life in an educational environment.
2. **To ensure the dog is well cared for** outside of the school day, with a consistent home environment where his health, wellbeing, and training needs are fully met.
3. **To offer children the opportunity to interact with a dog** in a structured and supervised way, supporting their social and emotional development, building confidence, and enhancing academic outcomes—particularly in areas such as reading and communication.
4. **Murray will be based in school regularly**, particularly in the Emerald classroom with Year 3/4 on Wednesday mornings and will also work with individual children where appropriate. He will begin by attending school in a series of carefully planned visits to help him acclimatise to the school environment.

As Murray becomes more familiar with school life, he will work towards a therapy dog assessment through [Pets As Therapy](#), ensuring that his work in school meets national standards for wellbeing and safety.

Murray lives with Miss Bennie in her home, where he is cared for at her own personal expense. His introduction to the school environment and to the children will be carried out gradually, through a series of carefully supervised visits to ensure his wellbeing and to allow him to adjust comfortably to the school setting.

Murray is registered with a local veterinary practice, where he receives thorough health checks and is kept fully up to date with his vaccination programme. This includes protection against common canine diseases as well as regular worming and flea treatment in line with current veterinary guidelines. As a result, there are no known health risks to children or staff from being in contact with Murray. A record of his vaccinations and annual health checks is kept both by [Your Name] and on file with the veterinary practice.

While we understand that interacting with animals is not suitable for all children, we also recognise the many potential benefits for others—including emotional support, improved wellbeing, and enhanced learning engagement. Any parent or carer who does not wish for their child to have contact with Murray is welcome to inform either Miss Bennie or Mrs Wells, and we will ensure their wishes are respected.

Murray will not be on site every day but will attend school on a regular basis, particularly on Wednesday mornings with Year 3/4, and may also visit at other times to support individual children or specific activities. A full risk assessment is in place and will be reviewed at least annually, alongside an evaluation of the impact of Murray's presence by the school's senior leadership team.

Conditions of Murray at School:

- Murray will be always kept on a lead when moving around the school building or grounds.
- He will always be supervised by a responsible adult while on school premises.
- Any contact between Murray and children or visitors will be always supervised by a trained adult.
- Anti-bacterial hand gel will be available and encouraged for use after any interaction with Murray, for those who choose to touch him.
- Murray will not have any contact with younger siblings or children under the age of 3.

Health and Safety Risks

Hazard	Risk	Risk 1-5*	Likelihood 1-5*	Risk Rating	Controls in place
Murray getting over excited when interacting with children.	Child knocked to the ground.	1	2	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Murray will always be in the care of a responsible adult and will never be allowed to freely roam the school premises. • Children will not be left with Murray unsupervised. • Murray will always be on a lead when moving around the school building. • Murray has been trained not to jump up or bite the children. • Pupils will be taught the impact of their actions. • Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent Murray from chasing them. • Murray will attend the vets/ groomers regularly to make sure that claws are kept short and is walked on concrete/ tarmac daily to keep them trimmed. • Murray will be in the building from 7am and will have had a walk before coming into school. • Murray will be walked during break and lunchtimes to ensure that he has had a break and walk throughout the day. • Miss Bennie will monitor his mood and behaviour constantly throughout the day and for the first couple of weeks someone from home will be available to collect him if deemed appropriate.
	Child scratched by Dog.	1	2	2	
	Child bitten by Dog.	5	1	5	
Murray escapes from the	As above.	1	2	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Murrays' safe space is big enough for him to be happy and safe during the school day and the children are taught not to tease him.

designated area (Emerald, office, headteachers office).					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If Murray escapes from the room he is in, Miss Bennie will radio for support and have him returned to the classroom. • The Murrays' safe space is Emerald, Office and Headteachers office. • There are 4 significant members of staff who will be called upon in an event of the Murray getting loose or if he needs attention at any time, they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Miss Bennie (Class Teacher) ○ Mrs Pigney (Office) ○ Mrs Jury (Office) ○ Mrs Wells (Headteacher)
Dog hair causing allergies.	Children have an allergic reaction	3	4	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents can inform the school of any specific allergies that children might have. • A list of children who cannot interact with Murray will be kept by all members of classroom staff and will be maintained by Miss Bennie and office staff. • Children will have the opportunity to interact with Murray as they wish and those with allergies will be able to opt out of the interaction. • Children have been taught to wash their hands after active participation with Murray. • Murray will be de-shed weekly by Miss Bennie and his bed changed weekly and cleaned.
Children getting germs from Murray.	Children/ Staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs.	1	1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should Murray defecate on the school site Miss Bennie will clear this up immediately and dispose of it in a safe manner. • The area will then be disinfected with an appropriate animal disinfectant. • All immunisations are kept up to date. • Murray has tick and flea treatment monthly. • Murray receives worming treatment every six months in line with our Vet practices policy. • Murray will not go into the school dining hall at mealtimes and will never go into the food preparation area of the kitchen. • Anti-Bacterial gels will be used before and after interacting with Murray.

Non-Health and Safety Risks

Hazard	Risk	Risk 1-5*	Likelihood 1-5*	Risk Rating	Controls in place
Financial cost of the dog's upkeep	School unable to afford ongoing cost of Murray's day to day upkeep or medical bills.	1	1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Murray is the responsibility of Miss Bennie; she is financially responsible for all his care. • Murray is the responsibility of Miss Bennie outside of school hours. • The school only has responsibility for ensuring appropriate business insurance is in place for Murray when he starts any contact with pupils from Autumn 2025.

Claim is made against the school re: behaviour of dog	School not adequately covered financially.	1	1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Murray is insured privately, via Miss Bennie, with pet plan. This provides third party liability insurance for up to £2,000,000 per incident. The insurance is renewed annually (Documents available as proof) • Murray will also be insurance for business use by Beccles Primary Academy for Pet Business insurance. This provides public liability for up to £0,000,000 from when he has any contact with pupils.
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Additional Control Measures (To consider changes in working practice, equipment and staffing levels)	Action by Whom:	Action by When:	Action Completed:	Residual Risk Rating
Date of Review:	Comments:			
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