



Wyre Forest School

Introduction

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 wellbeing of children (and staff) and lower the rate of anxiety, simply by making the environment happier, more enjoyable, and less forbidding.

The rationale behind this decision was as follows:

- For the school to have a pet that was able to live as naturally as conditions would allow.
- For the animal to be properly cared for outside of the school day.
- To have a pet that the children could interact with, and be of benefit to, the children's social and emotional development.

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. Any parent who does not want their child to interact with the dog is invited to write to Mrs Garratt and inform them of their wishes. There are no diseases associated with the puppy/dog as her vet will be responsible for vaccinations completing regular health checks and necessary treatment. A copy of the dog's health records will be updated and kept in school. The dog will also be insured.

The risk assessment below is a working document and will be checked annually by key staff.

HAZARD	RISK	RISK 1-5	CONTROLS IN PLACE	REVIEW DATE
Dog getting over excited when interacting with children.	Child knocked to the ground. Child scratched by dog. Child bitten by dog.	2 2	The dog will always be in the care of the designated handler or a "responsible adult". "Responsible adult" shall mean any member of staff who has read the policy fully, received appropriate training and is aware of the risks and responsibilities to both children and staff. The dog will never be left unattended. The dog will never be allowed to roam freely around the school premises or off lead when on school/residential visits.	July 2026



Wyre Forest School

			<p>The dog must not be passed to any member of staff not deemed a “responsible adult” as defined above.</p> <p>Children will not be left unsupervised with the dog.</p> <p>The dog will always be on a lead when moving between classrooms or on a walk by the designated handler or “responsible adult” while the children are in school or offsite eg” Walk & Talk time.</p> <p>Pupils have been and will continue to be taught about the consequences of their actions.</p> <p>Education of this nature is continually given to children, and often to the whole school, through assemblies and PSHCE sessions.</p> <p>Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent the dog from chasing them.</p> <p>The dog will undergo puppy training at 8 weeks and formal training from the age of 14 weeks with an experienced dog trainer.</p> <p>Risk of scratching and biting will reduce, and the risk assessment will be reviewed, as the dog progresses through</p>	
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Wyre Forest School

			<p>her weekly training. Evidence must be recorded and kept in school.</p> <p>All staff will have been introduced to the dog and expectations of having a school dog.</p> <p>The designated handler will ensure the dog attends the vets regularly to ensure she is in good health and that her claws are kept short.</p> <p>The room where the dog is kept will have a sign on the door to inform others that the dog is present.</p> <p>The room where the dog is kept must have a lock on it out of the reach of children, and the door must be locked if the dog is in there on their own.</p>	
The dog causing allergies.	Children or staff have an allergic reaction.	1	<p>Parents have been asked to inform the school of any known allergies before the introduction of the dog to the school.</p> <p>If required, a list of children and/or staff who should not interact with the dog will be kept in school.</p> <p>The children will have the opportunity to interact with the dog under the supervision of the designated handler or “responsible adult” and those with allergies will be able to opt out of interaction.</p>	July 2026



Wyre Forest School

			Children will be taught to wash their hands after active participation with the dog.	
Children getting germs from the dog.	Children or staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs.	1	<p>Should the dog defecate on the school site, a member of staff will clear this up immediately and dispose of it in a safe way.</p> <p>The dog will be trained to toilet in an area of the grounds that children have limited access to. The area will be disinfected as required.</p> <p>All immunisations will be kept up to date in accordance with the European Pet Passport Scheme and a record will be kept of this. Evidence must be recorded and kept in school.</p> <p>Flea treatment is carried out at 4-week intervals and is recorded. Evidence must be recorded and kept in school.</p> <p>The dog will not be allowed in the school dining hall at meal times, and never in the food preparation area.</p> <p>The dog will be regularly wormed. Evidence must be recorded and kept in school.</p>	July 2026
Noise/barking	Some children unable to cope with the noise.	1	<p>The dog is being introduced into the school environment from an early age so will be used to a noisy environment so is less likely to bark (Whippets rarely bark).</p> <p>Extra orientation sessions in place for specific children.</p>	July 2026



Wyre Forest School

			Ensuring some children have ear defenders if needed.	
Financial cost of the dog's upkeep.	School unable to afford the ongoing cost of the dog's day-to-day upkeep or medical bills.	1	<p>The dog will be insured by the school for Public Liability Insurance.</p> <p>All veterinary fees are covered by 'Pet Plan' under the dog's private insurance paid for by the Headteacher.</p>	July 2026
Walk & Talk Time (Staff lead member will be responsible for the risk assessment of the Walk & Talk time and/or offsite visit – Mrs Garratt will only be responsible for Molly.	All hazards already identified (see above)	See above	The dog will be insured by the school for Public Liability Insurance.	July 2026
	Members of the general public interacting with Molly	2	The dog will always be in the care of the designated handler or a "responsible adult". "Responsible adult" shall mean any member of staff who has read the policy fully, received appropriate training and is aware of the risks and responsibilities to both children and staff.	
	Molly interacting with other dogs.	2	<p>The dog will never be left unattended.</p> <p>The dog will never be allowed to roam freely around the school premises or off lead when on school/residential visits.</p> <p>The dog must not be passed to any member of staff not deemed a "responsible adult" as defined above.</p> <p>Children will not be left unsupervised with the dog.</p> <p>The dog will always be on a lead when moving between classrooms or on a walk by the designated handler or</p>	
	Transporting dog.			



Wyre Forest School

			<p>“responsible adult” while the children are in school or offsite eg” Walk & Talk time.</p> <p>Dog will wear a lead cover and/or jacket explaining that she is working in order to help prevent other dogs from interacting with her when off site.</p> <p>Dog will always be transported in Mrs Garratt’s car.</p>	
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Key:

1 – Low Risk

3 – Medium Risk

5 – High Risk